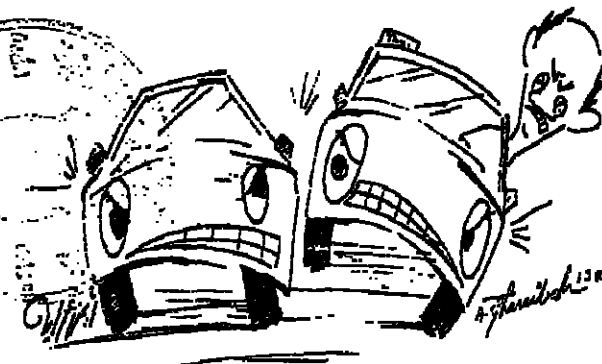


Window on Jordan

OK, maybe that's a bit harsh—learner drivers may be forgiven for their poor driving habits, but taxi drivers, who presumably hold valid licences, should know better.

Dangerous driving is a real problem in Jordan, and taxis are not the only culprits. Witness a common scenario: a car swerves into the fast lane causing another to slam on his brakes to avoid a collision, but it is the driver in front who caused

A funny thing happens at roundabouts 100. Rationale goes out of the window, and the national driving psyche emerges in all its glory. On the approach, instead of slowing down to check traffic coming from the left before joining the roundabout, drivers (and here taxis really show



Continued on page 3

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

AMMAN, 6-12 AUGUST 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 9, 350 PAGES

Political reform needed to address national issues

The Kingdom has experienced harsh conditions but it has always successfully managed to deal with them, such as events in the 1950s, the

of handling things on the other," he maintained. The political will of the Jordanian people has been put to the test more than once with-

The professor attributed any deficiency in the current political and economic system to the existence of a group of unqualified people occupying critical positions in the government. Alternatively, he said "it could be a group which has affiliations with outside parties or it could be internal corrupt groups."

Continued on page 2



● **Bosnian Croa** women watch forensic experts exhuming a mass grave, 4 August, in the village of Humac in central Bosnia, 100 kilometers from Sarajevo. The victims were killed in 1993 during Muslim-Croat clashes in Central Bosnia. According to the International Red Cross reports there are still 20,000 missing persons in Bosnia after the three and a half year-long war.

Reuters

ARAB BANK PLC

GIVEN NEW RATING

Senior Debt : assigned AA-
Short-Term : assigned TBW-1
Issuer : assigned B

Thomson Bank Watch is pleased to announce the assignment of new ratings for Arab Bank PLC. The rating exercise for Arab Bank was indeed unique as the legal structure of the bank is unlike anything previously seen, even when compared to developed markets. While typically it is unusual to split a rating as such, the very nature of the legal structure of Arab Bank necessitates such an action.

Arab Bank PLC can lay claim to one of the longest and decidedly the most distinguished histories of any bank in the Middle East region. The bank's origin pre-dates World War II and has continued on during periods of regional turmoil and strife that would have severely tested and

destroyed the resolve of many institutions not just regionally but globally. if similar circumstances were applied. During all of these periods, the bank has not just weathered each crisis, but in every case benefited and emerged even stronger.

Arab Bank can be described in at least two ways. The first way, the bank is clearly a survivor. The second way is that the bank's own name can be a misnomer, especially from risk profile perspective. While the bank is headquartered in Amman Jordan, the overall country

risk profile resembles some of the best banks domiciled in both Western Europe and the United States. The bank brings with it, a long history and a philosophy that its customers are indeed "first and most important". It is this philosophy that has created the bank that exists today and that can lay claim to be a peer bank when compared to some of the best banks in the world. This philosophy has also moved Arab Bank into being one of the only true "flight to quality" banks in the Middle East.

Arab Bank is diversified over a broad geography where operations comprising more than 80% of consolidated activities are conducted outside of Jordan.

The unique capital structure enables the bank ratings to be considered independent of any sovereign rating for the country in which the Arab Bank is headquartered. Further there are sufficient legal precedents and opinions which indicate that any potential extraterritorial seizure of Arab Bank external assets by local regulatory authorities is highly unlikely and not valid under most if not all legal jurisdictions. Accordingly, as the vast majority of Tier 1 capital, and assets are

outside of Jordan thereby greatly diminishing the element of transfer risk and as a hard currency (US Dollar) is the functional currency for Arab Bank. Thomson BankWatch employs the global ratings scale for the Arab Bank rating.

Asset quality is extremely solid given the history of expertise cultivated and applied to lending. Additionally, a conservative level of loan loss reserves is maintained to fully cover non-performing loans. The tenor of the loan portfolio is quite short with 80% scheduled to mature within one year as of Y97. Total loans for Arab Bank typically represent less than 50% of assets.

The stability of earnings is enhanced by the conservative asset/liability management as well as the lending strategy and geographic diversification. Also supporting the sound financial position is a healthy capital base with the BIS Tier 1 ratio exceeding 12% and shareholders' equity to assets of nearly 9%.

Arab Bank is well established and dynamic, as demonstrated in its sound performance and impressive perseverance. Management has planned for any potential disruption in the Arab Region by building capital in its branches in some of the

world's major financial centers. Even in the unlikely event of a regional difficulty affecting more than Jordan, Arab Bank has more than sufficient asset liquidity to repay all foreign currency obligations. As Arab Bank has several sizable subsidiaries, affiliates, and an extensive network of international branches, the bulk of consolidated equity is housed outside of Jordan. Management has coordinated the broad geography of banking operations through the hubs in Amman, London and Geneva.

The underlying strategy has been a focus on serving Arab communities worldwide, particularly through trade finance both on and off of the balance sheet. Credit quality is solid, as are loan loss reserves and capital. Management prefers to maintain a high degree of liquidity mainly in conservative inter-bank placements and government securities. Consequently, returns have been modestly lower than those of diversified international banks. Management's successful and well developed strategy provides the foundation for the continued sound expansion of operations.

Huge Israel nuclear weapons program is open secret

Yanunu had been held for 12 years in a windowless, 6-foot-by-9-foot cell with a dark, steel door, buffeted by mood swings and depression, according to his brother. Since being convicted of treason and espionage in 1986, he had been allowed little human contact and only two hours of exercise a day, and he spent the rest of the time reading Kant, Nietzsche and Sartre and reflecting on the acts that had landed him in prison.

Vanunu's crime was that he leaked to a British newspaper one of the worst-kept secrets in post-World War II history: that Israel possesses the largest undeclared nuclear arsenal in the world, sophisticated, unmonitored and devastatingly powerful. By divulging

the details of the secret nuclear reactor where he had worked for nine years. Vanunu broke a national taboo, piercing the haze of ambiguity that had shrouded Israel's atomic-weapons program ever since uranium atoms were first split in the Negev desert town of Dimona 40 years ago.

"This is a subject that may not be broached in Israel," Vanunu's brother, Asher, said recently. "And when my brother did, they wanted revenge, pure and simple.... But even after all these years, he is not sorry for what he did. He has a total belief that he did the right thing."

In the wake of the recent nuclear tests by the two other unofficial nuclear powers in the world, India and Pakistan, the issue of Israel's nuclear arsenal is all the more pressing. As Vanunu, who is now 43, enters the final six years of his 18-year prison term, Israel still has not signed the international nuclear Non-



Israeli soldier flanks one of the latest Israeli missiles played at the military exhibit in Tel Aviv this week

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2 THE STAR

Crown Prince chairs cabinet meeting

AMMAN, (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, presided over part of the cabinet meeting on Tuesday and issued directives on a number of local and regional issues under discussion.

The Regent reassured the Council of Ministers on the health conditions of His Majesty King Hussein, indicating that His Majesty was following up on all issues of concern to Jordan.

The Crown Prince briefed the cabinet on the latest development of the peace process, stressing Jordan's keenness to end the current crisis facing it with a view to achieving comprehensive and permanent peace that guarantees the rights of all parties.

On the water situation in Jordan, the crown Prince reiterated that water was a right to all citizens, asserting that the government will not accept exploitation of alternative water resources.

He issued directives to set a neutral investigation panel to address the problem of water in Western Amman.

The Regent underlined the need to take all necessary steps to provide alternative water resources quickly and effectively to prevent exploitation of the current situation.

In a statement to reporters after the meeting, Prince Hassan said that His Majesty the King is following up on issues of concern to the homeland.

With regard to the internal situation, he said that today's cabinet session focused on the economic issues and the state's expenditure which will be discussed clearly and comprehensively.

The Crown Prince called for activating the fruitful and constructive dialogue, stressing the need to focus on the development march with extensive national participation.

Regarding the peace process, the Regent voiced hope that a breakthrough would be achieved soon between the Palestinians and Israeli. He affirmed Jordan's support to the Palestinians in their quest to achieve their rights on their national soil.

He said that it is premature to make a judgement on results of the recent negotiations between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel.

The Regent touched upon the mission of UNSCOM in Iraq, expressing hope that sanctions imposed on Iraq will be lifted soon.

Responding to a question regarding Jordanian efforts to solve pending issues in the negotiations, Prince Hassan said that we are speaking about Jordanian interests rather than a Jordanian role. "Jordanian interests demand concentrating on helping the Palestinians remain in their homeland," Prince Hassan said, pointing out that Jordan moved to make progress through the American plan and tendency. "We have not closed the file on this stage," the Regent said.



Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent and Prince Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein ride camels in Eastern Badia 2 August. Prince Hassan made an inspection tour to the Royal Badia Forces in east Jordan and conveyed His Majesty King Hussein's greetings to the troops. King Hussein who is in the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, said last week in televised remarks to Jordanians, that the type of cancer he had could be treated to allow complete recovery.

For the Record

Prince Hassan receives Youssi Sareed

AMMAN, (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday received Youssi Sareed, member of the Israeli Knesset and Labour Party. The discussions focussed on the efforts exerted to transcend the obstacles facing the peace process. During the meeting, Prince Hassan affirmed the necessity of pooling all efforts to bring the peace march out of the crisis. It is passing through, and to push it towards achieving a durable and comprehensive peace based on the implementation of all agreements signed, and meeting the rights of all parties. Sareed briefed the Prince on his party's stands regarding the latest developments of the peace process, stressing the party's commitment to the peace process, and keenness to put it on the right track.

Rifa'i meets Chilean Ambassador

AMMAN, (Petra)—President of the Upper House of Parliament Zaid Rifa'i met on Tuesday the ambassador of Chile in Jordan. The two sides reviewed bilateral relations in different fields, particularly the parliamentary field, and means of boosting them.

Minister of Awqaf meeting

AMMAN, (Petra)—Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs Dr Abdel Salam Abbadi received on Tuesday the visiting Mufti of Bulgaria, Mustafa Haji, and the accompanying delegation. The discussions focussed on Islamic issues of common concern, in addition to Prince Hassan's care for the Islamic communities in Europe. The minister expressed readiness to offer support to the Islamic communities and Muslims all over the world.

American expert on water

AMMAN (Petra)—American expert and representative of the US Stanley Company, Michael Ring has denied reports that he has submitted a report to the government on results of his study on the water pollution problem in Western Amman. In a statement to Jordan News Agency, he said that he was surprised to see a report published in the name of the company in some of today's newspapers. The report indicated that Mr Ring submitted a report to the government and left Amman. Mr Ring who is still in Amman, said that he will continue to provide consultations to the Water Authority during this period, stressing that his work has not ended yet. The US expert asserted that he has not presented any technical report on the water problem issue neither to the Water Authority nor to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

Atomic energy

TUNISIA, (Petra)—deliberations of the 10th Session of the Arab Atomic Energy Commission's Conference began in Tunisia on Saturday. The two-day conference discussed a number of reports on the commission's activities last year as well as its achievements in the fields of nuclear techniques. Participants discussed the working plan, projects and the commission's budget for the coming two years as well as the commission's plan to support the establishment of an Arab free trade zone. Other topics for discussion included preparations being taken to hold the Fourth Arab Conference for the Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy scheduled in Tunisia between November 14-18 with the participation of more than 300 researchers and scientists. The commission's members are Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Palestine, Jordan and Sudan.

Cabinet/session

MADABA, (Petra)—Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Majali reassured Jordanians on His Majesty King Hussein's health, indicating that he made a telephone call with His Majesty on Friday and that the King was in a good health. During a cabinet meeting in Madaba, the Prime Minister said that the meeting was a dedication and a practical application of the philosophy the government believes in and which is based on freedom and participation. "This meeting is a mechanism to implement this philosophy for the service of this nation and its development," Dr Majali pointed out. The Prime Minister called for the cooperation of all to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment. He also underlined the need for concerted efforts to employ Jordanian labor, and qualify it to replace imported labor.

Iraq snubs UN over proposals to extend weapons inspections

Continued from page 1

Iraq, but cautioned against jumping to conclusions. However, analysts said Saddam could be gambling on halting inspections by the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and forcing an end to world economic sanctions without incurring another US military strike. The response from the UN Security Council has appeared less abrasive than on previous occasions.

"Iraq has probably come to the conclusion that the West's will to threaten war has dissipated entirely, so why should it even go through the motions of cooperating with UNSCOM," said Tim Trevan, a former political adviser to UNSCOM.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said Britain was "disappointed that the Iraqi government's antics appear again to be thwarting UNSCOM's work."

Russia, which has helped to iron out similar spats between Iraq and the weapons inspectors in the past, championed by Washington, also urged calm. "It is now extremely important not to stoke tensions over Iraq but to steer things toward continuing normal cooperation



Iraqis demonstrate in Baghdad against the UN, Tuesday

between Iraq and the UN Special Commission to fulfil completely the UN Security Council resolutions," said a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Officials at the United Nations are also playing down the affair. Earlier UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who brokered an end to the previous arms stand-off in February, said that "though this may be a major hiccup, [it is] a hiccup that we can overcome."

Danger: experienced drivers!

Continued from page 1

their prowess!) wait till there is absolutely no space on the roundabout at all before squeezing into the chaos. Arms appear from windows, and above the interminable honking of horns, voices are raised in frustration. It's no big surprise to see a roundabout accident.

But why wait for the accident? There is obviously a serious lack of discipline amongst drivers, something that is reflected in recent statistics showing a marked increase in car accidents. Something needs to be done.

So, three cheers for General Abdallah Al Shamayleh, the director of the Traffic Directorate. He has also noticed the madness on our roads and is determined to do something about it. Meetings will be held, committees will be formed and the public will be made aware of the need to drive more safely.

In the meantime, I'll continue to enjoy my Formula-One style taxi ride to work...with my eyes firmly shut, humming along to the Habibi music. Perhaps I just need a bit more sugar in my tea.

Political reform needed to address national issues

Continued from page 1

Nagash believes that the solution to the Jordanian question lies in the hands of a limited number of the faithful Jordanians, adding that "some are already decision makers but they have not yet had the chance to make any positive changes." There are, however, many unknown soldiers, the professor continued.

The King's reassuring speech last week calmed jitters in the currency market, which saw many rushing to exchange their Jordanian dinars to dollars, but taking a political overview, Nagash stated, "It's a unique case, to find political institutions and resolutions marking their legitimacy by the character of their leader and not the other way round," concluding, "It's logical for the government to face such crises by taking the initiative to resign and leave the path open for a more effi-

Press: Another round in the Lower House

THE LOWER House continues to debate articles of the controversial draft Press and Publication law. The people's representatives have so far discussed 26 articles of the draft, however, the press body is not optimistic about the outcome of the debate. In a surprise move, 35 out of 65 deputies voted in favor of increasing the capital of weekly newspapers from JD 50,000, as suggested by the House's National Guidance Committee, to JD 100,000. Discussion of the draft is expected to continue this Sunday.

Meanwhile the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a non-governmental organization of journalists devoted to upholding press freedom worldwide, registered its deep concern about the draft press law approved last week. According to the CPJ the draft constitutes a grave threat to press freedom in Jordan and it will restrict the internationally recognized right of journalists to freely report news and opinion. CPJ warned of the upcoming censorship, fine, and suspension of newspaper happened to violate the "variety of vaguely worded prohibitions".

Biore' launches in Jordan

'Clean, honest' range taps into the growing market for facial care for young women

BIORE', THE latest facial skincare sensation to be launched in Jordan, has literally taken the world by storm as young women recognize the unique benefits of this revolutionary range which has been created especially for them.

Particularly suited to young skins, the biore' range from skin care specialists Jergens is based on the concept that beautiful skin is only possible through deeply effective cleansing.

Aimed at the often neglected 18-34 age bracket, whose skincare needs fall between the anti-acne requirements of teens and the anti-wrinkle remedies of the over 40's, the biore' launch line consists of four easy-to-use products offering effective

skincare.

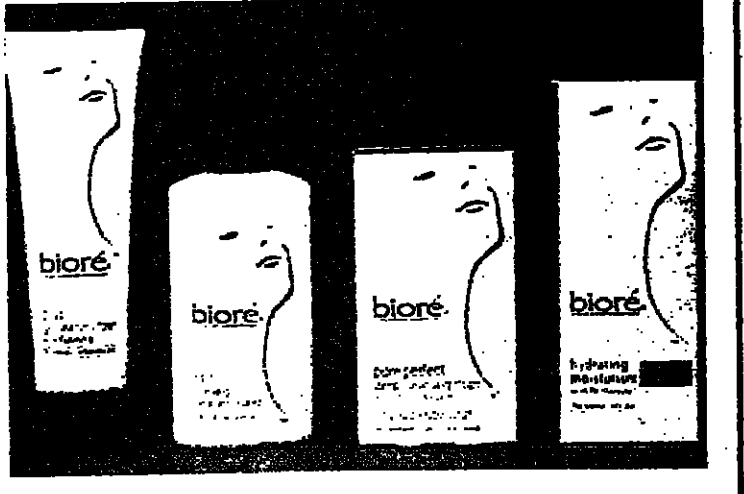
"Such has been the success of biore' wherever it is launched that stocks are being depleted as soon as they hit the shelves," said James Banville, Jergens Regional Manager for the Middle East. "There is already a high awareness of biore' in Jordan, and we are confident that the Jordanian public will welcome being able to purchase it locally."

Leader of the pack in this launch range in the biore' Pore Perfect Deep Cleansing Strip, a product so dramatic and innovative that it has created a whole new skincare category for itself, winning awards and devoted users wherever it is launched. Based on the bonding qualities of a special ingredient called C-Bond which, when activated by water, literally locks on to all the impurities in the skin and pulls them out, the strip provides visible results instantly.

Designed to be used about once a week for absolutely clean skin, the process is easy, and results immediately visible if the user follows a few simple steps. Simply wet the nose, apply the strip, wait for about 10 minutes until it dries, and remove gently. Evidence of totally unclogged pores is right before your eyes... and it is quite often not a pretty sight!

Whilst undoubtedly the star of the range, the Pore-Perfect strip is not the only product to benefit from the legendary research and development expertise of Jergens and users are urged to use the entire range for totally effective regime.

Other products in the biore' launch range

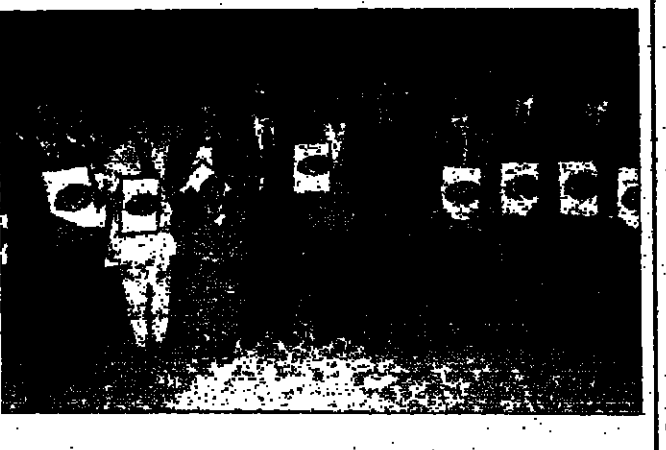


include two superior facial cleansers, one a non-foaming gel, the other a foaming formulation. Both products use the natural plant extract Sorbitol to bond with impurities in the skin, dissolving them in a uniquely effective way, leaving the skin totally clean, fresh and revitalized.

Moisturizing in the range is handled by the biore' UV filter Hydrating Moisturizer, which is 100 percent oil free so as not to re-clog all the pores that have been so effectively cleaned. The inclusion of Nutramide, a moisturizing element found in naturally healthy skin, acts to help maintain the skin's own moisture reservoir without leaving a greasy residue.

Since it's launch just over a year ago, biore' has become one of the best selling facial brands in America and is set to hit the top in UK also.

Air France honors its top travel agent



AIR FRANCE held its Annual dinner for the Top Travel agents at L'Olivier restaurant recently. Certificates were given by the Regional Manager for Jordan, West Bank and Iraq, Mr Jean-Jacques Ledanphin to the top Travel Agents in Jordan.

Mr Ledanphin thanked the top travel agent for their performance during last year and their continued support to Air France which allows Air France to increase its frequency to

Four Non-stop flights weekly To/From Amman. The Golden Certificates received by Alwaha for Travel, the Orientals for Travel, Albadia for Travel, Altawfiq Travel. The Silver Certificates were given to: Near East Tourism Center, Falcons Travel, Bestours, Adwan Tours, Bisharat Tours. The Bronze certificate received by: Hala Travel, Trust Tours, Eastern Services.

For the Record

6 AUGUST 1998

J O R D A N

THE STAR 3

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar



Azzaydah



Zoubi

Hot water

Discussion of the water crisis at the Lower House between the joint committees of agriculture, water, health, environment and the ministers of Water, Health and other experts last Tuesday led to a heated dispute between Deputy Minister of Water, Azzaydah and Pawan Al Zoubi. As Al Zoubi was delivering his speech in the second session, Azzaydah interrupted him, shouting that everyone in the room was only propagating lies and the discussion was a waste of time. Then he left the hall. After the discussion, they continued to debate and Al Zoubi told his opponent that if he really believed what he said, then he should call for a vote of no confidence in the government and that he would back him. Azzaydah became furious and stressed that he never felt confident in this government, but Al Zoubi does.

Privatization

Parts of the Public Transport Company (PTC) could be sold off. Minister of Transport and Communication Sami Gammoah said 25 bus lines in the Greater Amman will be privatized. Already 32 shareholding companies have submitted applications to buy the lines from the Ministry of Transport.

Finders keepers

Officials in the Jordan Telecommunication Co. were pleased to discover 30,000 new lines by accident—in their own telephone cabinets! The phone lines were thought to have been out of use. A good omen for the JTC who, we are told, are working day and night to upgrade the telephone infrastructure in the Kingdom.

Off

The Professional Association is no longer boycotting *Al Rai* daily, meaning they will now allow the publication of their news and activities in the newspaper. The Association had decided to give *Al Rai* the thumbs down for publishing an advertisement they regarded as implying "normalization" with Israel. A similar action by the Associations was about to be taken against *Arab Al Yom* for publishing material about a joint-Israeli project in Jericho, however, after a full explanation, no action was taken. Their boycott of *Al Rai* had lasted for nearly a month.

Facelift

Amman could be getting a facelift. The Housing and Urban Corp., is to start renovating five areas in Amman at a cost of JD 949,000. The areas include Wadi Abdoun, Safah Al Hashim, Al Lowza, Wadi Al Hadeid, and Al Masdar. Some buildings will be demolished, but officials at the Corporation say that owners will be compensated.

Al Amal Center

The Al Amal Center launched a press campaign to make people more aware of the need to participate in the health protection program. Mrs. Bothaimah Jardaeh, program director said that "we hold great hopes for this program and it will mean that more patients from Jordan and other Arab countries will come to this center." She continued saying that the program is based on the social solidarity concept in which patients would subscribe to the cost of their treatment. The program director estimated that if 200,000 families with an average of five members each, each subscribed an annual JD 10 to the program, then Al Amal Center will receive JD 10 million. The minimum subscription fee of JD 10 will be considered as a "health insurance," according to Jardaeh. "The patient will get a free regular checkup, free treatment and a discount of up to 25 percent for lab examinations."

Cracking down on 'nuisance phone calls'

A novel way has just been found to crack down on "nuisance phone calls," according to sources at the Public Security Dept. This is a new service provided by the Jordan Telecommunication Company. The service is simple enough. As soon as somebody rings you up, his number appears on a little screen on your telephone set. If it is a "nuisance call," all you would do is take down the number, and phone the police.



Waiting for salvation

The executive committee of the National Conference for Salvation and Reform rejected the decision taken by the Council of Professional Associations which called for the postponement of the conference for at least eight months. The committee asked the council to review its resolution and reduce the delay to no more than two months. The council is now revising its decision and will give its final decision within a month.

No smoking on RJ flights

Royal Jordanian (RJ) is now operating a second non-smoking weekly flight New York as of Sunday. RJ has been operating one non smoking flight each Wednesday since early May to meet the wishes of passengers who prefer a smoke-free flight. RJ prohibited smoking on its flights to Aqaba, Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Larnaca 10 years ago.

The Star
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly
OnLine
<http://star.arabia.com>

Water Crisis

Demand for mineral water outstrips supply

By Ibtisam Awadit
Star Staff Writer

THE CURRENT crisis over Amman's contaminated water supply and the increasing demand for clean drinking water in Amman has triggered a "mineral water crisis". Mineral water has become a rare and coveted product.

"I searched for a bottle of mineral water to make my grandson some milk, but I couldn't find one in the whole neighborhood," said one exasperated grandmother. The shop owners told me not to bother because it's a waste of time," she added.

Meanwhile reports have been coming in from the Customs Dept. that mineral water is being smuggled in from neighboring countries such as Syria, Saudi Arabia and Israel. Consequently, the Ministry of Industry and Trade has notified concerned parties to strengthen their procedures to prevent chaos or abuse amongst retailers.

"Almost 70 violations were recorded by workers at the ministry following the increase in the price of mineral water," said Ahmad Asaf, secretary general of the Ministry of Supply. Some greedy retailers are continuing to store up bottles in order to gain greater profits as the water shortage continues. Consumption of mineral water has increased significantly since the water scare began.

The local product is clearly not meeting the market's needs although the Mineral Water Companies in Jordan have already doubled the quantity of production. However, they have refused to allow imported mineral water to enter the market. The industry justifies its refusal saying it must protect its major investment (JD 16 million). Local mineral water suppliers also fear being badly affected by foreign competition. The Ministry of Trade, however, is now urging the cabinet to allow the importation of mineral water, but no decision has yet been issued.

In the meantime, some of the main mineral water companies stopped importing small empty bottles, and have been buying more large plastic bottles to try and meet consumer demand.

There has still been no clear explanation for the change in the odor, color and taste of Amman's drinking water. The phenomena was registered on 7 July when our equipment registered that something was wrong—then complaints from residents began," said Munther Khalfat, secretary general of the Water Authority (WA). People were not offered a single bit of information to diffuse the panic.

The WA's response to public complaints was somewhat unusual. Rather than cutting the water supply completely until the problem was solved, they decided merely to reduce the water supply to the western regions of the capital to one distribution a week, (rather than twice), and continued to distribute the contaminated water of usual.

Jordanian drinking water comes from



accompanied by two water experts. The tour began in Um Qais at King Abdullah Canal, then three kilometers further on, the experts took samples at the spot where the Tiberias water reaches the canal and mixes into one stream. At that spot, the same odor that emanates from taps in the capital filled the air. At the end of the tour the experts took final samples from Deir Alla which supplies Amman with its drinking water, which were sent for testing.

Michael Ring, another American expert from Stanley Company, had already given the press an expert opinion on the water problem, saying that "the Zai Plant is designed only to treat running surface water, not stagnant water of the kind that comes from Tiberias." This meant that the Zai Plant is not qualified to treat water with organic materials, algae or any other unidentified material.

However, Mr. Ring, in an interview with the Jordan Television denied making this statement and reassured the public with this declaration: "The headlines were incorrect, the quality of water coming from Zai is similar to that consumed by the American people." Ring announced that he would be perfectly willing to drink water from the Zai treatment plant. Stanley Consultants will be submitting their report to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI) in due course.

National concern over the safety of the water supply has led local people to call for the resignation of the Minister of Water and Irrigation, Munther Haddadin but no action has been taken to date. Meanwhile the minister continues to advise citizens to boil their water thoroughly for two minutes as a precautionary measure.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, however, has ordered the formation of an independent committee to investigate the water crisis, in particular, the cause of the polluted water, and the procedures taken by the MWI and Ministry of Health in examining the water. The committee, which will submit its report within

two main sources—the Yarmouk River and Tiberias Lake. Reporters from The Star recently followed the watercourse.



Huge Israel nuclear weapons program is open secret

Continued from page 1

Proliferation Treaty, which has been signed by most of the world, nor has it agreed to any of the inspections and other safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the eyes of many arms control experts, it has by its example encouraged the spread of nuclear weapons around the world.

Israeli officials, saying their country's very existence is threatened by a ring of hostile Arab neighbors, some with their own weapons of mass destruction (chemical and biological), argue that their need for a powerful deterrent outweighs the global danger of nuclear proliferation.

"We are a very small country, badly outnumbered by conventional forces in the Arab countries and without the strategic depth necessary for absorbing armored and air attacks," said Gerald Steinberg, a political science professor at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv. "That's why we're different."

Unlike India and Pakistan, which are both facing sanctions and penalties as a result of their recent nuclear tests, Israel has never publicly tested and therefore has emerged virtually unscathed by the matrix of laws and treaties designed to discourage the spread of nuclear weapons. Indeed, Israel's nuclear capabilities apparently have continued to grow at a time when the rest of the world is moving back from the brink of nuclear conflict—while Israeli officials remain unwilling even to acknowledge the existence of their strategic weapons program.

"We know there's suspicion about us, and we say, if suspicion is sufficient to create deterrence, then what more do we need?" said Shimon Peres, the former prime minister and creator of Israel's nuclear program, in an interview recently. "So you continue to be suspicious. I'll continue to be ambiguous. It serves both our interests."

Jane's Defense Weekly, numerous US government agencies and other experts estimate that Israel has between 100 and 200 nuclear warheads, many of them fission-boostered, high-yield weapons dozens of times more powerful than those that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To deliver these weapons to their targets, Israel has plenty of fighter aircraft as well as ballistic missiles, including tankers full of Jericho I and Jericho II missiles, which can travel as far as 900 miles.

Although it has suspected since at least 1960 that Israel was developing nuclear weapons, the United States has always treated Israel as a special case. It is a democracy, an important strategic ally, and a responsible nation with whom the United States has an unusual and especially close relationship. What's more, Israel is one of the few countries that lives under constant threat of annihilation from powerful neighbors.

When Israel's nuclear program was first envisioned in the late 1940s, both Israeli officials and their Western counterparts still had the memory of the Holocaust

fresh on their minds. Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, noting dryly that "6 million Jews were murdered by conventional weaponry," sought definitive security guarantees for his country from the United States and other western countries. When he did not receive the assurances he wanted, he opted instead for the bomb.

To oversee its infant nuclear project, Ben-Gurion appointed his young protégé, Deputy Defense Minister Shimon Peres, who said from the start that the "nuclear option" was designed purely as a deterrent and that Israel would never be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East conflict. "I built Dimona to bring us to Oslo, not to bring us another Hiroshima," Peres said in the interview, referring to the Oslo peace agreement that was signed with the Palestinians in 1993. "We wanted it not to fight a war, but to prevent one."

For these reasons and others, the United States was willing to look the other way, according to many analysts, including Peres himself. Despite a few abortive efforts to crack down—including a threat by President Kennedy to Ben-Gurion in 1963 that "America's commitment to Israel security would be seriously jeopardized" if Israel didn't allow inspections of the Dimona reactor—most administrations have made their peace with Israel's nuclear ambitions, as long as a low profile was maintained.

"The nonproliferation laws have all been sculpted so that Israel is exempted," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a non-profit research institute in Washington, D.C.

In a recent interview, Paul Warnke, former head of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, described his efforts in 1968 to convince Israel to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Warnke was bargaining hard with Yitzhak Rabin, who was then ambassador to Washington, threatening, among other things, to hold up the sale of F-4 fighter planes if Israel did not comply. But in the midst of the negotiations, President Johnson called Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford and ordered him, Warnke said, to back down.

"I was called off," said Warnke. "There was a call from the White House to Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford, who called me. We were told to stop pushing. Right away. And in the end, Israel never signed the treaty."

In the early years, Israel insisted repeatedly that its nuclear program would be used only for peaceful purposes. But in the years that followed, its military intentions became unignorable. Uranium began to mysteriously disappear from ships, and Israel was believed to have cooperated closely with the apartheid regime in South Africa in building nuclear weapons. In 1979, an American satellite detected a mysterious explosion in the southern Indian Ocean, which many scientists believe was an Israeli nuclear test. ■

LA Times-Washington

Leadership program provides 'young leaders' with skills to lead

By Aida Taweeel
Special To The Star

LEADERSHIP SKILLS are not inherited, they are learnt. It is with this in mind that the International Leadership Academy, established in Amman last year, held its second annual program, titled a "Framework for Learning about Leadership."

The Leadership Academy is part of the United Nations University in Tokyo, which aims to espouse the ideals of the UN.

"It seeks to provide training in leadership skills and attitudes while fostering commitment to sustainable development, democracy, civil society institutions, and dispute resolution," said the director of the Leadership Academy in Amman, Dr. Adel Safy.

"Through leadership training we seek to develop and strengthen social responsibility, and commitment to service."

These ideas and views are

put into effect through dialogue and discussion. The Leadership Academy places great importance on breaking down cultural barriers. That is why every year it brings "young leaders" from all over the world together to hammer out issues of global concern, through workshops and seminars.

The setting up of the Academy in Amman was inspired by Her Majesty Queen Noor and Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali. This year's program ended with a keynote speech by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on the importance of leadership skills for peace, prosperity and global development.

The Leadership Academy aims to provide young leaders with firsthand information from the experience of world leaders, diplomats and government officials. In its second program, which ended this week, former UN leaders like Boutros Boutros Ghali, and the

Rector of the United Nations University Professor Hans Van Ginkel took part. Former Prime Minister of Costa Rica, Dr. Oscar Arias and former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres also attended.

The aim is to provide an insight into the complexities of working at the top, of the difficult decisions one is forced to take and of what is needed to promote stability and prosperity.

Participants included lawyers, doctors, social workers, and writers. They came from all walks of life, from around 65 countries in the world. The program's organizers want to show good leadership skills to the participants, to make them more effective leaders in their fields.

Luis Correa Marquez, a lawyer from Costa Rica gave his view on the program. "Leaders involved in government activities in many countries, and throughout the region must realize that social diplomacy

should be seen as the foundation of prosperity."

The program stresses global interaction for the betterment of mankind and the need for conflict resolution. Participants were divided into groups; the first went to Palestine, Israel and Egypt, the second to Cyprus and Turkey, and the third to China and Japan. The purpose of these visits was to acquaint participants with developments around the globe.

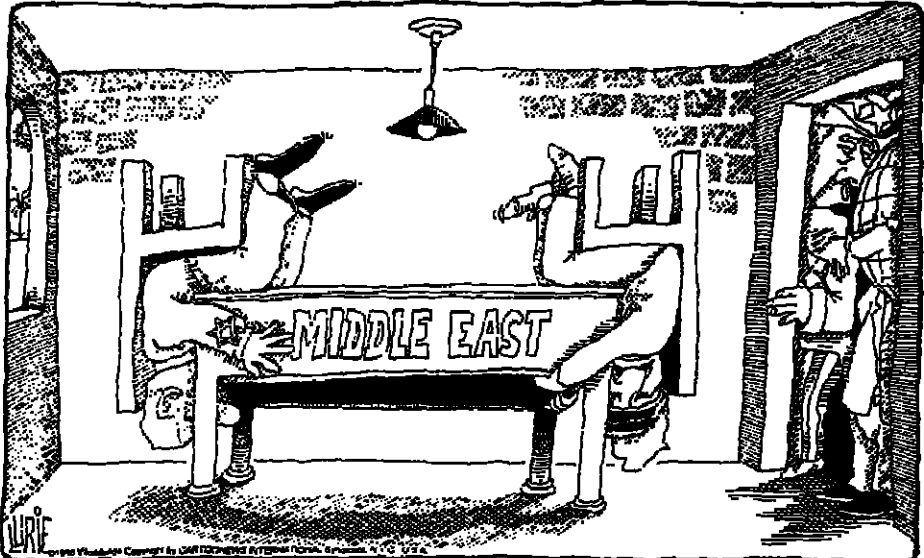
Dr. Safy promises that next year's programs will be even richer. "There are two programs for next year: the 'Extended Leadership Program' that runs for eight weeks through March and April. We will invite five or six prominent thinkers from around the world, to each give talks for a week."

In addition the usual leadership program will be held in the summer. "It will have 100 participants who will go to Asia, America and Africa, and Europe," the director said. ■



Safy

Lurie's NewsCartoon



(Meme: Every now and then we turn them over for another round of talks.)

Our Say...

Iraq again on world agenda

THE LATEST break-down in the Iraq-UNSCOM talks in Baghdad this week hardly comes as a surprise. Even before the arrival of UNSCOM's chief Richard Butler to the Iraqi capital, state-run newspapers were engaged in a heated attack against the Australian diplomat whom they accused of losing credibility and of serving US interests. As Mr Butler was forced to cut short his visit, after Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz rebuffed his latest proposals to continue UN weapons arms inspections, the scene is set again for a showdown between the Security Council and the Iraqi leadership.

The last time such a confrontation took place, over allowing UN inspectors to go into presidential palaces, the United States mobilized two airplane carriers in the Gulf and threatened to use force against Iraq. The crisis was resolved last February after UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan brokered a deal with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The Iraqis were told that there was light at the end of the tunnel, meaning that the tough sanctions regime, imposed after the swift Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990, may be lifted or eased before the end of this year. While the inspection process continued normally and without incident, the standoff between Iraq and UNSCOM remained. To this date all essential weapon files, namely nuclear, biological and chemical, remain open. In fact, the latest revelation that Iraq may have armed its missiles with the deadly VX nerve gas has dealt a blow to previous efforts to reach an early conclusion to the inspection process.

Iraq's frustration is obvious and understandable. Weapons inspection has been dragging on for the last six years and the human toll of the embargo has been tremendous on the people of Iraq. There is a growing suspicion, even among European countries, that US policy towards Iraq, which rests on the premise that sanctions will not be lifted until President Saddam Hussein is removed from power, is strongly linked to UNSCOM's agenda and the man who heads the commission. It can be argued that the intensive and comprehensive disarmament program of Iraq over the past six years must have achieved most, if not all, of its objectives. This is how France and Russia, and many other countries, feel today.

This latest crisis between Iraq and UNSCOM comes at a time when the White House is embroiled once more in the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal and Europe is trying to figure out a sound policy on the Kosovo crisis. The Arab world continues to vent its frustration with the Middle East peace process at the US and Israel. The world is not ready for a repetition of February's confrontation between Iraq and the United States. The time is ripe for a serious discussion of the Iraqi issue to spare the region another bloody mess. ■



Palestinian women ride in the rear of a police vehicle enroute to President Yasser Arafat's office during their protest calling for the immediate release of their sons held in Israeli jails August 3. Dozens of Palestinians marched with pictures of their imprisoned sons to Arafat's office in Gaza City demanding he secure their release from Israeli jails.

Reuters

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The water problem

Luckily we don't live in Sydney!

By Nabeel Al Sharief

OUR NATIONAL news agency Petra decided to re-use an international news agency item earlier this week that talks about water contamination in ... Sydney, Australia.

When I first read the news item I could not believe my eyes. Quite naively I thought that our national news service had decided to be transparent for a change and was tackling the problem of water contamination in Amman head-on. But I was disappointed when I realized that the news item was in fact dealing with a problem in Australia!

Our official media was only doing what it usually does in times of local crisis—neglect the issue completely or divert people's attention to a similar mishap going on somewhere else!

Petra's re-use of the international news item on Sydney's water problem is intended to remind our citizens not to over-react to the water problem in Amman or be spoiled or picky in their attitudes vis-a-vis this issue.

In Sydney, the report says, people have been told to boil the water before drinking it. Does this ring a bell? If the technologically-advanced Aussies are boiling their water why should we (third-worlders) find it unusual to boil water before drinking it?

In Sydney, the report goes on to say, people are asked not to use tap-water to

brush their teeth and not to even give it to their pets to drink.

The message that our news agency wants to get across is that we—spoiled Ammanites—should be grateful and thankful we are not living in Sydney. Our water problem is bad, yes, but it has not reached the gravely dangerous levels that people in Sydney are having to cope with. Petra is asking us to see the full half of the glass for a change, rather than the empty half!

Sydney, the report asserts, is a much larger city than Amman. I should hasten to point out, however, that the report does not mention Amman or deal with the problem in our capital city.

It only talks about Sydney and tells us that the population of this Australian city is three million. The assumption here, and it is only an assumption, is that the problem in Amman, because of its

relatively small population compared to Sydney, is much more manageable. Here we have another reason to be thankful!

The craftily re-used international news item, contains two points that needs further scrutiny, however, if we are to understand Petra's real reason for carrying the story!

It contains a statement by the Minister of Planning and Civil Affairs in New South Wales in which he says that the Sydney Water Authority had made a mistake in failing to notify citizens of the dangers associated with drinking tap water. He went on to add that those responsible for the problem will be laid off.

Does Petra hint, then, that this should be the fate of the officials who are responsible for the water problem in Amman?

The international news item also talks about the huge compensation claims that the water authority (in Sydney, of course!) is having to pay to settle lawsuits against it.

I am positive that our colleagues at Petra did not mean to suggest that either officials should be laid off or compensation paid to citizens for the water contamination in Amman, for these particular aspects of the problem happen—only in Australia! ■

Eye on Jordan



Islam, the American paradox, and the Fourth Revolution

By Mike Hoss

NEW YORK (AAM)—As national barriers give way to globalism, America will have to brace for the fourth transformation to a more inclusive America. When our Founding Fathers declared "All Men Are Created Equal," little did they know how much pain their ideological progenies would endure to win legitimacy for the absolute-ness of the All.

For two centuries, the American ideology would be put to the test. And with much pain and sorrow, at each transformation, the circle of inclusion would be stretched further. But why can't America move forward at will and without the foot dragging? This is the American Paradox which continues to confound us today. Tragically, no less than two dozen victims of exclusion languish in American jails today for all the wrong reasons and are being denied the due process most Americans take for granted. Those human beings America unjustly deemed "undesirable" are stripped of their human rights and are condemned by America to the margins of freedom. Hundreds of thousands more are judged "suspect" and continue to live the gradual erosion of their civil liberties and potentially their freedoms too. On closer inspection, those people are primarily of the Muslim faith.

Not unlike the early outcasts, the American revolutionaries and the African slaves, Muslims in America found their guardians too. Historically, those guardians were the constitutional police and the challengers of the status quo preceding each American revolution. They are initially disdained by the mainstream, and their views barely tolerated. Nevertheless, the undesirables and their guardians were always sent to remind us, as in the past, that our American journey is not over yet. Their presence amongst us today is a sign for America to start moving forward again.

American Theory, Un-American Practices

The American ideology was so ahead of its time even its early messengers were unable to embody the uncompromising moral principles or foresee the enormity of its impact on the future of mankind. No where else did the followers outperform the prophets than in America. If our Founding Fathers were present today, they would marvel at their ideological descendants' genius. We have succeeded where they seemed to have faltered. And if we were to return back in time,

we would be condemned as delusional if we offered a glimpse of the future (our present) to our predecessors.

While ideological revolutions tend to peak at the start and taper off with the coming decades, the American ideological revolution took two centuries in its search for greatness. When juxtaposed with its past, America today bares little resemblance to its unrefined ways of early decades. The transformation is startling. America had a peculiar love hate relationship with its guiding principle, the Constitution. Americans fought hard to be included and they fought hard to exclude. Today, the American umbrella of opportunity and civil liberties is more inclusive than ever but we still fall short of the ideal we have committed to in our seventeenth century Covenant. It took three revolutions to bring America to where it is today. But one final correction remains to be made and it may take a fourth revolution to widen the umbrella of liberty and opportunity in this global village.

In the absence of our Founding Fathers' guidance, the Guardians of the Covenant today are the visionary radicals, constitutional purists, today's ideological mavericks, and tomorrow's engineers of the new mainstream. Some are victims of the status quo and have little to lose in undermining it, but most break off from the mainstream. No one knows how they are chosen, but every American revolution found its honorable rebels. Their most potent weapon is the chasm America often creates between the status quo and the ideals we had committed to. With each American revolution, that weapon proved the most potent of all.

The first American revolution gave us our independence from tyranny and oppression. Those radical revolutionaries were the first Guardians of the Covenant to undermine the status quo and set the stage for our nation's birth. They were dubbed traitors and rubble-rousers. In the end, they did prevail and America was born.

With the Civil War, the second American revolution commenced. Years before, "radicals" began to hammer at the edges of a complacent America calling for the end of slavery. With time, the anti-slavery minority became the majority and the institution of slavery crumbled.

The third American revolution was brewing in the south. The guardians were already plotting against the status quo. When it was over in third America, no one was to be denied life, liberty, and the pur-

suit of happiness. Another key pillar of our Covenant was upheld and the stage was set for the fourth and final American revolution.

The incongruities between the practices of the Framers of the Constitution and the wording of the Constitution raises some interesting observations as to the power of the human spirit and its ability to transcend its material surroundings and limitations. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were a clear-cut indictment of the American culture of exclusion then and until the Civil Rights movement began to bear some fruits. The American journey to greatness proves three points: America is not capable of tolerating disparities between ideals and practices for too long; America is capable of transcending its limitations; and when America is given a choice between abandoning ideals or abandoning a comfortable status quo and unfair privileges, America chooses the ideals. What motivates great men such as Thomas Jefferson to set in motion the dynamics of social and political reforms that one day would undermine the comfortable status quo. Foresight or divine intervention? Maybe both.

The Fourth Revolution

Today, the final challenge has arrived. Who will unite America with its ideals once and for all and bring the centuries old journey to closure. Who will be first to dissolve the status quo, turn the mainstream upside-down, and draw the final boundaries of the new mainstream in accordance with America's global responsibility and moral authority. In this era of great American triumphs, one would expect an America at peace with itself to be an America ready to deliver on more promises. No American generation has the right to stop the journey forward. Ours not excepted.

Sadly, with no Evil Empires to train our nuclear guns at, America turned its attention to windmills. We have secured our peace in the world and our place in history but chose to deny others the right to their peace.

Instead of lighting beacons of liberty, we chose free trade and petty parochial interests. In a world which stood patient waiting for America to bear the burden of our sins, we turned our attention to their plight, America has yet to deliver. Today we stand in the way between the underdogs and their dreams of liberty. Worse yet, we are actively aborting campaigns of freedom while propping up tyranny and oppression.

Locked behind steel bars in

America are the avant-garde of liberty in the Third World. They are the enemies of the status quo where tyranny and oppression have struck roots. Predictably, the American mainstream today is preserving a global status quo that is not essential to our livelihood, but comes at a great cost to the lives of hundreds of millions around the world.

America must not continue to arbitrarily draw a line in the sand as to who is worthy of our Constitutional umbrella and who is less worthy. This arbitrary exclusion is reminiscent of our betrayal of native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and other people America deemed marginal at one point. Their only fault, they looked or acted different.

Today, the Muslims of America are enduring what amounts to a systematic dehumanizing campaign so successful even special laws were crafted by our Congress to "deal" with these undesirable. From the FAA's "Secret Evidence" practices, the boldness of these exclusionary laws and procedures must shock decent Americans into action.

In a display of gross injustice, these Muslims are barred by our laws from sharing the American ideals of liberty and justice with their countrymen across the oceans. Why? It is bad for the status quo. As a result, millions of Muslims languish under occupation, tyranny, and oppression around the world. And when Muslims who sought sanctuary in America hoist the banner of liberty and spread American ideals, they end up behind bars in America. If you too see the disconnect between the ideals and the practices, then you have guessed correctly. This is a sign of another American transformation in the making.

Are we ready to declare the status quo null and void again? If we are fortunate enough, absolute and universal justice will be fashioned in our lifetime and the transformation will be a tranquil one. It is up to America to expedite the final journey towards fulfilling its elusive promise.

Let us remember that in the age of nations, America is an adolescent nation. We are still witnesses to an America in its formative years. It is too early to judge us by our trials and errors. Let us be judged by our will to surmount our weaknesses and how far we have come. ■

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbakh
Solo politics

IF IT wasn't for the gravity of the situation, it would have been amusing to observe the trends in Israeli politics. Mr Netanyahu is heading a government of right-wing groupings. There are the religious-political components mainly concerned with preserving their privileges and maintaining the so-called Israeli spiritual soul, and not with the issue of percentages and withdrawals.

The settlers' representatives are most concerned with the consequences of peace for the settlements on the Occupied Territories; they are the biggest obstacle in the realization of Oslo, and agreements with the Syrians and Lebanese.

Settlers are not part of the religious right, and indeed are often criticized for their secularism. However, the last part of the amalgam, is of the Sephardic secularists, and Russian recent arrivals.

Though represented through their political parties, they have found their fortunes with Likud. This amalgam with its contradictory make-up, and different aims, is held together by its suspicion of Arab politics and Palestinian aims.

The agendas of Mr Levi and Mr Sharan-sky's constituencies are propounded by the fact that military service is not the most preferred destination for the Israeli youth.

So what does the Israeli Labor Party do? They move against the religious right by proposing to enlist the students of the Yeshivas in military service, and make derogatory remarks against Sephardic Jews, whom incidentally compose 50 percent of Israeli society.

However, it should be remembered that the settlers lobby is already alienated. What is left is the constituency of Mr Sharan-sky, but then again, probably the Labor Party has not yet come around to alienating them too.

At a time when Mr Barak ought to be expanding the base of support for his party, Labor seems determined to shoot itself in the foot. Despite the fact that statistics show that the majority of Israelis prefer the implementation of Oslo, however, to rely on such a single peace issue in the election campaign is dangerous—even that brought Netanyahu to power.

It is crucial for Barak to present his party as an inclusive force, rather than as an exclusive one. For the polarization of Israeli society, is the polarization of peace. As for the beleaguered Mr Netanyahu, he is condemned to a straight jacket of by the contradictions of his partners.

Some have threatened to withdraw from the coalition if he gives more land to the PNA, others have threatened to do the same if he doesn't. With the rate of growth in the Israeli economy hovering at zero since he came to power, there isn't much money to go around for the financial demands of his coalition partners. Likudniks are deserting his leadership, and the recent allegations in the course of justice, during the trial of an Israeli businessman, has sent his spokesmen somewhere else, under the sun. The USA is not very sure how to handle him anymore, and the Arab partners in peace are getting increasingly confused by his remarks and policies.

All this is rubbing off on the whole Arab political scene. Suspicion is becoming dominant among Arab people and leadership. Under the circumstances, Mr Netanyahu is now singing solo. His election has increased the sense of his solitude. ■

Business scene

Preparations are underway to organize the first show of Jordanian products in Algeria, 29 July to 2 October. The show, organized by the Society of Jordanian Exporters, aims at promoting national exports in Algeria, including pharmaceuticals, garments, chemicals, foodstuffs, utensils and detergents. Jordanian exports to Algeria last year totaled about JD 21.5 million compared with JD 6.4 million in 1996, whereas imports in the same year were at JD 1.1 million against JD 154,000.

Good news for smokers: Total profits of the Tobacco and Cigarettes Company reached JD1.6 million in the first half of this year, compared with JD 777,900 at the same time last year. Its traded assets were JD 9.8 million against JD 7.6 million. The company's balance sheet in the first half of this year showed that the assets rose from JD19.6 million to JD 26.1 million, at the same period last year. Profit from sales recorded a rise, from JD 1.3 million last year to JD 2.4 million in the first half 1998.

Mid-annual earnings of the General Investment Company reached JD 655,600 compared with JD 949,700 in the first half of 1997. Sales to June were valued at JD 1.7 million, up JD 0.2 million on the same period last year. The company's total assets rose from JD 10.8 million to JD 11.2 million.

Total sales by the Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Company reached JD10.4 million in the first half this year. It generated profits estimated at JD 228,300 compared with JD 539,000 in the same period last year. The company's balance sheet was about JD 20.03 million at the end of June.

The Housing Bank made pre-tax profits of JD 18.4 million in the first six months of the year. This is good news for the bank. Compared to the same time last year, it only made net profits of JD 13.3 million. The Housing Bank celebrates its jubilee anniversary this month.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 5 AUGUST

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7190
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
¥	0.4801	0.4825
₹	0.1227	0.1233
₪	0.5624	0.5652
₹	0.3667	0.3685
₹	0.0419	0.0421

JTC leads the privatization process

By Ilhami Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

THE GOVERNMENT'S plans to sell 40 percent of its equity in the Jordan Telecommunication Company seem to have been delayed and are now awaiting further consultation. It may even be that the government now is less enthusiastic about the transaction, and it may be being reconsidered or even canceled.

Referring to the issue, Mr Ali Shukri, chairman of JTC's board of directors said, "The

government's plans to sell its stake in the company to a strategic partner are being revised and priority will be given to local partners." This statement confirms that JTC is undergoing some new and substantial changes.

The Jordan Telecommunication Corporation was the first public institution in the kingdom to undergo the government's policy of privatization aimed at giving the private sector a more active role in development. It has been run on a commercial basis since 1996.

Mr Shukri, who has been newly appointed to chair the company's board, held a press conference recently on the company's activities in all sectors, saying that its engineers, technicians and administrative officers are excellent. "We are in the process of restructuring the company to meet our current needs long term aims," Mr Shukri is leading a new era in the history of JTC, and many analysts hint that he has been appointed to annul a transaction that was about to be finalized for a strategic partner. Whether the JTC is about to be completely restuffed with his appointment is too early to say.

Since the government began the process of privatization by offering 40 percent of its JTC equity for sale, an increase on the initial proposal of 26 percent, critics have warned of the negative effects that this strategy may bring and have blamed the government for selling profitable institutions and encouraging foreign investors to penetrate sensitive sectors.

They stress that the impact of selling a big stake to a foreign partner also carries a security risk and this is the main reason for opposition to the idea. Both the Public Security Department and the Armed Forces' networks are linked to the JTC's networks. To disconnect these networks from the JTC following a foreign buy-out would be costly, said Mr Shukri. The alternative is therefore to give priority to national investors to buy shares in the JTC. These shares will be floated soon on the Amman Financial Market.

Nonetheless, there is still the false notion that our private sector is not ready to take the initiative and fill the gap of the so-called strategic partner, whose identity is causing much speculation.

Mr Shukri stressed that if decision to sell to a foreign partner went ahead, certain restrictions and conditions would be

placed on the buyer.

Supporters of the principle of selling to foreign partners, however stress that it is necessary as Jordan lacks the large capital, high technology and advanced know-how of the large international firms. Mr Shukri refused this stating JTC does have sufficient technology and ability without turning to foreign companies.

If the privatization process is to be continued, however, and a strategic partner is required at some point, then this resolution should be reviewed and benefits must be offered to those who have served the company for a long time.

This point has been at the root of opposition to the government's proposals. Many employees have been anxious about their fate, wondering if they will lose their jobs. "This situation would reflect negatively on their productivity by reducing their enthusiasm to work and be creative," Mr Shukri elaborated. The company has lost many highly qualified engineers and computer specialists who have quit because they were not satisfied with their salaries. "The company is presently considering employee salary grades and allowances in a study, which will be inclusive according to specialization, supply and demand." He added that the company's new administrative framework will focus on employee competence and productivity.

It is clear that the company is on the threshold of substantial positive changes, which will



Shukri

upgrade its current services and introduce new ones to the Jordanian public. Soon every house in the kingdom will be connected to the telephone service. Eight new services will also be available to households, banks and commercial corporations and other companies. These services include automatic redialing; three-party communication; call transfer; and the caller identity system, dubbed the solution to nuisance callers. By the year 2000 the number of subscribers connected to the telephone service is estimated at one million, up from an estimated 600,000 subscribers by the end of this year.

JTC used to contribute about JD 84 million in revenue to the state's coffers annually, but this year, Mr Shukri pointed out, a certain sum will be deducted to finance company investments. He added that JTC's total estimated revenue this year is estimated to reach JD 189 million, compared with JD 169 million in 1997.

ISO 14,000
Improving standards of environmental management

By Star Staff Writer

THE TREND in the world now is to have fully integrated business management systems which meet all the required conditions and specifications for high standards.

ISO 9000 certification has become the aim of many sectors in Jordan's industry and services. It proves that the quality of the products is high, to an internationally recognized level. By the end of July this year, 121 companies had received ISO 900 accreditation, now regarded as a prerequisite for recognizing high quality.

The industrial sector faces constant challenges to keep up with the latest technological advances. ISO accredited industrial facilities and factories have to abide by strict specifications and standards to minimize the possibility of releasing dangerous waste and elements into the environment.

ISO 14,000 is the new challenge for industry. In Jordan only one company has been awarded this accreditation, for the Environmental Management System (EMS) system. Jordan Cement Factories Co. began complying to the standards early in 1997 and got certification in May this year.

Every industrial company wishing to introduce the ISO 14,000 system requires top management commitment to implement the quality con-

trols successfully. They must appreciate the positive implications that accreditation will have on the company's image.

Complying to required specifications for the EMS system is naturally connected to the benefit to owners of reducing costs.

As companies build up the EMS system they must put forward a plan for reducing environmental pollutants that includes setting realistic targets for the percentage of pollutants to be minimized.

Training is also essential. An ISO 14,000 is new to Jordan, there is a pressing need to implement a full training program to teach the required skills. Moreover, a program must be put in place to monitor the effectiveness of the EMS, so that the company can prove its compliance with the plan.

Interest in ISO 14,000 is growing. Sources at the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers (JEDCO) estimated that the number of companies working towards this certification will reach around 10 to 20 in the near future. JEDCO provides assistance to companies willing to upgrade, financially and technically, with the help of the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

Mechanisms of global economy grow increasingly complicated

By Evelyn Irtani

IT IS a doomsday scenario too real for Hollywood: The financial meltdown of a little-noticed Southeast Asian country pushes Japan to the edge of collapse, bringing the rest of the industrial world down with it.

To most economists, this notion of a global recession still seems highly unlikely. If minuscule unemployment and soaring consumer confidence mean anything, the US economy seems a bulwark against global meltdown.

But Friday's report confirming an abrupt slowdown in the U.S. economy, amid the drumbeat of bleak news from Japan—the two giants of the global trading system—has economists asking if the pace of globalization has surpassed their ability to assess the world's fiscal health.

What seems clear is that an exceedingly thin line exists between prosperity and stagnation in a world where jittery currency traders in London affect rice farmers in Indonesia, cost-conscious Tokyo housewives influence beef prices in the Midwest, and the fate of the Silicon Valley's biggest players could be determined by a cadre of Communist officials in Beijing.

"At the end of the day, do I think we're going to have a global depression or recession?" asked Marcus Noland, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Institute for International Eco-

nomics. "No. But do I think there is some real possibility? Yes."

For Noland and others responsible for monitoring the health of the global economy, the last year has been a tsunami ride through uncharted waters.

In many ways, the pressures facing the global financial system—triggered by the July 1997 devaluation of Thailand's currency and the regional currency fallouts that followed—are unprecedented because of the size and complexity of today's global economy.

The ease with which people, goods and capital flow across borders has made it impossible to predict the interplay between Asia's pain and the countless strands of world commerce. Even more challenging is the mix of psychological factors—the confidence issue—that ultimately determine where and how money is spent from one moment to the next, one country to another.

In this environment, any event that seriously rattles the global financial markets could conceivably push the economy over the edge.

Destabilizing shifts are already taking place across the globe as a result of the Asian fallout—unremarkable in themselves, but potentially dangerous in concert.

In recent weeks, nervous economists have begun slashing growth estimates as the Asian financial crisis widened,

depressing commodity and oil prices in Mexico and Canada, cutting into American exports, sparking capital flight in Russia and South Africa, and robbing manufacturers in China and elsewhere of overseas business as lower-cost, desperate Asian competitors turn their sights on customers in the United States and Europe.

The ripple effect could move something like this:

The collapse of buying power in what was once the world's fastest-growing market—Asia—represents about one-third of global gross domestic product—causes slower growth in Latin America, Canada and Europe, spelling trouble and falling profits for corporate America and its workers.

Declining profits translate into falling prices on Wall Street.

And that could mean tumbling confidence among both American consumers and the legions of foreign investors who have parked record volumes of their money in US stocks in search of a safe haven from Asia's shocks.

"We don't have the margins at the moment to absorb any more shocks," said Kenneth Courtis, the Tokyo-based chief economist of the Deutsche Bank Group, one of Europe's most aggressive global players.

It is Japan, the Asian giant whose beleaguered banking sys-

tem is sinking under as much as \$1 trillion in bad loans, that many experts fear could be the trigger for a global contraction.

If Japan's new government does not move quickly to restore consumer confidence, stimulate domestic spending and clean up the banking mess, the world's second-largest economy is in danger of sliding much deeper into recession. That could lead to the failure of several large banks, which would spark a panicked outflow of money, a

they've got to look elsewhere. In a slowing global economy, that means they are already stealing markets from other nations—like China and Latin America.

In recent months, the stepped-up pressure from Asian competitors has started to hurt China's manufacturers, particularly in areas like steel and apparel, where low-cost South Korean imports are finding their way into the mainland market.

Chinese and Hong Kong exporters could lose as much as \$18 billion in sales to Asian competitors, according to the Institute of International Finance, a think tank created by global banks.

China's top leaders have repeatedly promised not to devalue the yuan, but each competing shipment of cheap steel, apparel and computer parts undermines that resolve.

The devaluation of the yuan, a bastion of stability in Asia, could set off a disastrous further round of competitive devaluations as Asia's exporters scramble to underprice each other's products.

Meanwhile, each new disruption in Asia ripples further around the world.

The seven major Latin American countries—Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela—could see a deterioration of \$11.4 billion

in their trade figures this year because of lost sales and increased competition from Asia, according to the Institute of International Finance study.

Although Mexico's revitalized economy is expected to weather these new pressures, they are taking a toll.

Mexico, the United States' No.2 trading partner, is projected to lose \$5.4 billion in exports to cheap Asian competition, most of that in US markets.

Meanwhile, Asia's demand for oil has plummeted along with its economies, pushing crude oil prices to 12-year lows and creating such a serious glut that some producers are being forced to store their excess oil on tanker ships. That's good for the world's oil exporters such as Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia.

The Asian collapse has also given investors second thoughts about other high-risk areas. One result: They pulled capital out of Russia, pushing that country dangerously close to default in July before the IMF stepped in.

Among its many implications, the deterioration of Russia's economy sparked fears that its government would step up its export of gold, wreaking havoc in other gold-producing countries, including South Africa.

Over a five-week period this year, the South African currency, the rand, fell nearly 27 percent because of investor concerns over the interplay of the

Asian crisis, the gold market and problems in Russia.

Until now, the global shock absorber has been North America and to a lesser degree Europe, whose combined economies represent about two-thirds of the world's output.

Some of Europe's largest banks, which had expanded more aggressively in Asia than their U.S. counterparts, have taken an earnings hit in recent weeks because of Asia's downturn.

But for all its overseas expansion, most of Western Europe's trade and investment remains intra-regional.

In the coming year, the region will be preoccupied with establishing a common 11-nation currency. With Britain's economy slowing significantly, there is little expectation that Europe will be of much help absorbing the world's excess production of automobiles, computer chips and T-shirts.

In the end, it is the United States—the sole superpower and the largest and most dynamic economy—that will provide the answer to whether the world merely slows its economic expansion or falls into a slump. It is the only economy capable of providing enough buying power and capital to keep the wheels of capitalism moving.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

MARKET WATCH 1 AUGUST

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TADNCO Nisab Industry Arab Investment Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irish Electricity United Industry Zira Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Nisr Insurance United Electricity TADNCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union Bank United Finance Gulf Insurance
5.11 5.36 4.64	5.26 5.00 5.17	5.06 5.00 5.30	5.38 5.41 5.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Nisr Insurance Industry Union Trade Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coventry Industry National Cable Industrial Resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Kowid Bank Car Union International Telecom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Bank National Investment United Industry
5.14 5.15 6.67	5.31 5.25 5.17	3.16 3.70 2.94	5.66 5.88 4.00
General Price Pointers	167,430	169,590	172,220
Trade Volume	780,664	128,9190	897,838
Stock Volume	569966	839927	560916
Highest Traded Stocks			
Al-Ahli Bank	148975	Tourism Hotels	289,180
		Dar Al-Adab	131,084
		Arab Bank	433,725

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646499

A man looks at a bank display panel showing the Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong 3 August. Hong Kong stocks suffered heavy losses on Monday to close sharply lower as a weakening yen and a slide in HSBC Holding shares ahead of the banking giant's interim results battered prices across the board. The blue chip Hang Seng Index ended down 383.43 points, (4.83%), at 7,552.77 after falling to a session low of 7,537.25. HSBC shares tumbled HK\$10 (5.29%), to HK\$179.

Reuters



Children's Literature

Books to educate, books to entertain

The Star's Ghassan Joha speaks to prominent children's author Rawda Al Hudhud about the importance of promoting local children's literature



Rawda Al Hudhud. A collection of her books (Below)



CHILDREN ARE the backbone of society; bringing them up requires awareness of their rights and a special understanding of their needs. Children are educated, for the most part, through intermediaries (parents, teachers, uncles, grandmothers). However valuable, these people

tend to concentrate on passing on their own personal experiences to their offsprings, which does not necessarily equip them for the future. The world of literature, however, can not only educate, but it can entertain and entertain at the same time.

Colin Field, a British principal lecturer in education, once wrote: "Literature is more than an imaginative telling of a tale. It is the embodiment of some truth that is significant outside the fanciful world in which the child first encounters it."

Children's literature, as a genre, though considered by many to be modern, in fact began in Europe about 400 years ago. As the years went by, it matured as human knowledge expanded.

In 1979, when children's literature was blossoming as a genre worldwide, the United Nations declared the first International Year for Children. In Jordan, this was a milestone for children's literature.

Jordanian children, had previously had only access to translated foreign works. Since 1979, Jordanian officials, scholars and sociologists have become increasingly aware of the importance of creating local children's literature.

Rawda Farah Al Hudhud, a prominent Jordanian children's writer, tells *The Star*: "We have to create and develop our own children's literature on the basis of our history and national heritage and implant in them our sacred values for the sake of future generations."

Most of her books spotlight the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue in particular. Her latest book, written this year, is about Jaffa 50 years after Palestinians were forced to leave, and the establishment of Israel.

The prominent writer respects her young audience's ability to understand from a logical and rational point of view. It is not either easier or harder for a novelist to write for children, but what is important is to show parents and teachers how to deal with children, she says. "Books should be consid-

ered as the cornerstone of any culture and as an educational tool for people," the novelist states.

Trained as a lawyer, Mrs Al Hudhud says that children's literature in Jordan is now at a middle stage. "Unlike Japan, our literature can't be considered as progressive either in terms of quantity or quality." She adds that, "In Japan, on average, about 1000 new books are written for children each year, the figure in this country doesn't exceed more than 10 or 20 books per year."

Born in Jaffa and a high school graduate from Ramallah, Mrs Al Hudhud began writing for children in 1979. Today, she has 32 books with stories and plays to her credit. These books, which gained her many awards from Arab and national organizations, are diverse symbolic, lyrical and patriotic.

"Arab children's literature needs more work. There needs to be more writers, and what's more, they need to be encouraged by institutions and the government. In such an atmosphere, communication among children will be much more impressive and fruitful," Mrs Al Hudhud points out.

She stresses that information technology is a suitable method of communication as it is now a popular way of cultivating children's talents and abilities. However, she adds, "Technology is a double-edged sword that should be used to our own advantage."

Mrs Al-Hudhud urges Jordanian educational institutions to invest in children during the summer holidays. She now presides over the "Friends of the Children Society", which she formed in 1965. "The main objective of the society is to enrich children's knowledge and widen their horizons, encourage their hobbies, and attract parents by teaching them the principles of child care, psychology and health."

The society has established a number of cultural centers in the Kingdom, with books and relevant equipment, with a staff of 27 child care specialists. Its main center is in Marks.

Politics

Political opposition in Jordan defined

Al Moaradah Al Siaseyah Al Urduniah fi Saheen Amah, 1921-1991, (Jordanian Political Opposition, 1921-1991) by Ali Saadeh, Ad Dustour Commercial Presses, 1998, pp94.

Reviewed by Marwan Asmar

THE TERM 'opposition' has long been part of mainstream political culture. In all democracies in the world it has become part and parcel of political systems—as is the case in Britain for example. There, 'opposition' is seen as an essential part of the political system.

It is probably with this in mind that the latest book on political opposition in Jordan was written. Indeed, it is a major contribution, in Arabic, to Jordanian political culture—one that covers the development of the opposition, and of political parties since the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan back in 1921.

At the outset, the author establishes the fact that the term 'opposition' is fluid, meaning that in Jordan it has different forms, it can be 'popular', can come from political parties, or can be 'institutional'.

In seven distinct chapters Ali Saadeh talks about opposition in terms of different historical periods. His approach is lucid, he takes care to talk about the opposition—and the personalities and political parties involved—within the context of society, political developments of the time, and of reactions to it.

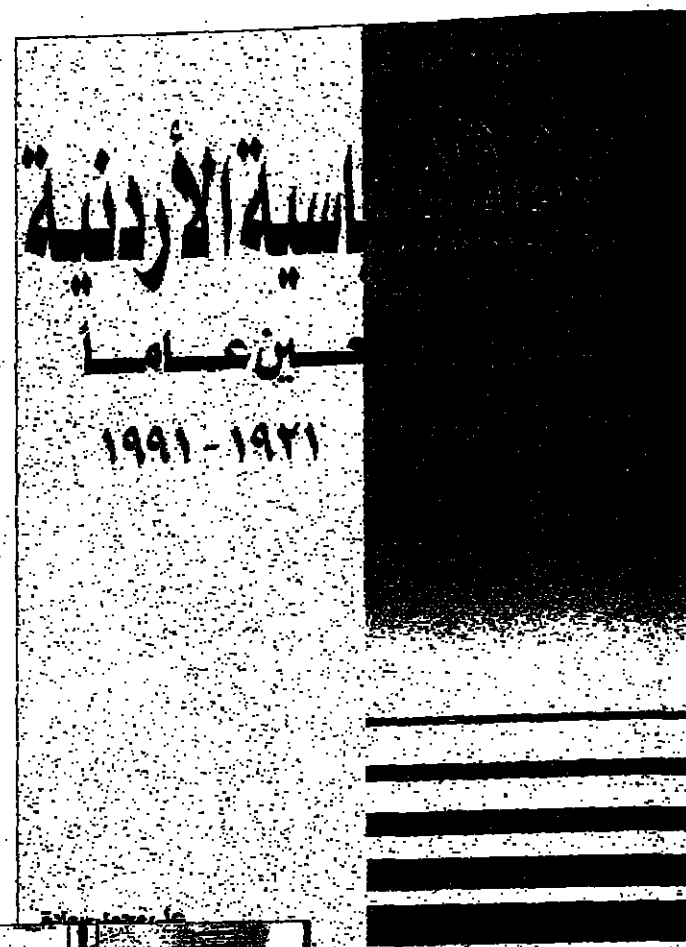
For example, he talks about the opposition to the Jordan-British treaty in 1928, and gives a brief synopsis of the development of what was then a growing opposition movement led by people such as Dr Subhi Abu Ghanimeh, Fawzi Al Nabulsi and Mohammad Taqfiq Al Najdawi.

What is interesting is that, at that time, these people would not have regarded themselves as 'opposition', but would simply have said they were working for the good of the country.

The author shows that opposition flourished in the inter-war period, but that the developments of other political parties took place, which, for want of a better word, can be termed pro-government.

The 1950s can be viewed as a boiling point in the Arab world. The Cold War, the development of bipolarity and superpower realignment affected the Arab world.

Nasserism, communism and Baathism have all moulded the region. These essentially different ideological trends, including the growing Islamic movement, had their political parties at one time or another, and became members of the mainstream political establishment, espe-



Saadeh

cially in 1956 and 1957—first as members of the Lower House, and secondly as members of the government.

Saadeh, a budding young author, who already has another book to his credit, says that Jordanian political parties in the 1960s were much influenced by Palestinian issues and the growing Arab-Israeli conflict. The formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, regional developments in Iraq, Egypt and Syria, and Saudi Arabia, all had their effects on the Jordanian polity.

The author provides the reader with a brief insight into the development of Jordanian-Palestinian relations throughout the 1960s—a critical period. Since the focus is on political parties, it is from this angle that these relations are tackled.

Saadeh talks about the 1980-1991 period from the point of view of the normalization of parliamentary life in 1989.

In this chapter he shows about the development of the Muslim Brotherhood as a growing political force in Jordan. The 1989 elections to the Lower House also receive particular attention, as they returned many deputies of different political colors—including Islamists, Baathists, nationalists and communists—to parliament for the first time since the late 1950s.

The book is well worth a read. However, I couldn't help feeling that I wanted more information, more analysis, different views. This is a giant topic to approach, as the author himself readily acknowledges, and more meat should be added. Although the author has a choice bibliography at the end of the book, footnote references at the end of each chapter would have been a welcome addition for the scholar and researcher looking at Jordan's political history.

History

A self-portrait of ancient Greece

Jacob Burckhardt's triumphant cultural history of the Greeks reviewed by A.C. Grayling

IN THIS age of laboratories and statistics it is easy to forget that our insights only come when we stand back and reflect. A mere mass of data, no matter how gathered, is in itself meaningless until an organising intelligence works upon it to discern its patterns and trace its implications. Every science has its associated art; a prime example is medical diagnostics, in which a good practitioner recognises disease where his patients and students see nothing but incoherent symptoms.

The same is true of history. When we seek the date of battles or the duration of empires, we begin with primary sources in documents and inscriptions and set about interpreting them. But if we wish to understand that yet more subtle and important thing, the history of the human spirit, we have to attempt the much harder task of feeling our way into the minds of the dead by interpreting their literature, art and architecture. This sensitive and delicate task is cultural history, and the prince among its practitioners is Jacob Burckhardt.

Burckhardt's celebrated *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* is a classic of the genre. But it is little known that he essayed the same kind of enquiry into the civilisation of the ancient Greeks, in a series of lectures first delivered at his university in Basle in 1872. He had already refined his techniques in his Italian studies, and was debating Greek culture with his younger colleague Friedrich Nietzsche as he drafted the lectures.

Always scrupulous, Burckhardt was reluctant to publish them, and indeed left instructions in his will that all but their first two parts were to be destroyed. This was because he was not a classical scholar

by training, and he knew that in the super-heated world of 19th-century Germanophone scholarship his excursion into Greek antiquity would be regarded as pernicious dilettantism. He was right: when after his death some of the lectures found their way into print, that ferocious doyen of academics, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, poured on them the boiling oil of his wrath.

To some extent Wilamowitz-Moellendorf was right, for Burckhardt made little use of the 19th century's advances in scientific history, whose novel methods had brought much new material to light. And he is even further justified now, after the wealth of discoveries made in our own century, especially by archaeologists. But these remarks miss a point, which is that Burckhardt sought to understand the Greeks through their own artistic and literary self-portrayal. As he points out, cultural history possesses a "primary degree of certainty" because its sources are self-revealing: it does not matter whether a given Greek writer's assertions are literally true, for one learns something about him and his time from the mere fact that he asserts them. In this way the cultural remains of the past offer an unexpectedly revealing window through time, and Burckhardt peers into it with a keen and observant intelligence.

Burckhardt's method is to consider a civilisation under the "three powers" that govern it: politics, religion, and culture. He takes a detached and often ironic view of the pervasive use of myth to interpret and justify their world, they were "tremendous Romantics" in the sense in which "romanticism" is contrasted with the "classicism" we standardly attribute to them. In several

ways Burckhardt anticipates such contemporary scholars as G.S. Kirk in his clear-eyed account of the nature of Greek myth. As in his work on the Renaissance, where he treats the city-state as a "work of art", he takes the "polis" of the Greeks to be an imitator of art, in its essence opposed both to individualism and the free development of culture.

At the end of his section on religion, he offers a starkly original and negative picture of the Greeks as a treacherous race with a profoundly pessimistic and despairing world-view. In this judgment he displays how much he was influenced by Schopenhauer. In the last section of the lectures, summing the Greek character, Burckhardt iterates the view he shared with Nietzsche that the "agon", or competition, is central to early Greek attitudes to life.

The lectures are the work of an exceptionally interesting and discerning mind. The Greeks who throng Burckhardt's pages are engagingly fresh, even in their mischief and pain; every aspect of their culture is made vivid by his gaze.

Burckhardt's lectures have been selected, and superbly edited and introduced, by Oswyn Murray. They constitute a handsome monument to Moses Finlay, that marvellous interpreter of the classical world who with the translator, Sheila Stern, initiated this venture; and to the two HarperCollins editors who brought it to us. Between them they have preserved a work for us that is an education, an ornament, and a delight.

Financial Times Syndication

Joyce is best

JAMES JOYCE is possibly one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. His once banned novel, *Ulysses*, was named by its publisher as the best English language novel of the 100 best for the 20th century. It is a single volume, number 15 and does not contain any violence or anything else that would offend the censor. Joyce's *Ulysses* was ranked number one by the Modern Library, which includes which is ranked, with the other 100, as the best English language novel of the 20th century. Joyce's *Ulysses* was ranked number one by the Modern Library, which includes which is ranked, with the other 100, as the best English language novel of the 20th century. Joyce's *Ulysses* was ranked number one by the Modern Library, which includes which is ranked, with the other 100, as the best English language novel of the 20th century.



Leather wrapped in lace

Tucked away in the heart of Amman lies a treasure trove of handcrafted leather goods. Lulu Khasaweh found the answer to her tattered leather sofa and chatted to owner, Mrs Doris Ghneim, about her flourishing business



Mrs Ghneim hard at work on one of her beautifully crafted leather goods

all his gifts and souvenirs from this shop. He was told that there would be no haggling over the price, and that whatever he bought would not instantly fall apart at the sight of the Queen Alia International Airport.

Mrs Ghneim's reputation is legendary, and the majority of banks, embassies and hotels in this country refuse to do business with anyone else. All desk accessories, folders and so on are supplied by her. Talking to life-long customers, it is obvious that it is the attention to detail that is her trademark. There is nothing shoddy or second rate about any of her goods. No matter how close you inspect her products, you will not find any weak seams or unsightly glue unlike a previous leather job I had done somewhere else, which resembled a 4 year old's first 'cut and paste' attempt in kindergarten. Of course, it is not only the quality of the material that makes this business stand out. It's the 24 carat gold service. And when it comes to finishing on time, as promised, she is a rarity. When I failed to pick up my cushion on the appointed day, she phoned me the next morning to inquire as to why.

Mrs Ghneim is justifiably proud of all her past achievements, and her future looks just as rosy. She has just signed a major contract with a leading German clothes company, who want her hand-made leather jackets.

Despite all the business collaboration with her native Germany, she has not been tempted to pack her bags and go back home. At times the temptation must have been overwhelming, as Mrs Ghneim is a widow, whose Arab husband and co-founder of 'The Leather Shop' passed away eight years ago, and both her grown up children have chosen to make a living abroad. She has steadfastly refused to turn her back on this country and the business she and her husband built from scratch. Today, her loyalty to both remains unshakable and inspiring.

One is reminded of the American writer, Gertrude Stein, who once said, "America is my country, but Paris is my home town." Mrs Ghneim has taken Jordan to her heart and has made it her home. She is a credit to Jordanian businesswomen, and flies the flag for all that is positive in this country. Her business might be in leather, but the service is so good it often feels that the leather comes tied with a ribbon of lace.

SITTING IN my living room had become a bit of a nightmare for me. One eye was trying to concentrate on the News At Ten, but the other kept staring at the tear in my leather sofa cushion. It was only when the children (bored with Monopoly) began to see who could make the most balls out of the sponge stuffing, that I realised something had to be done.

I had reasons for putting the job off for so long. Past experience had taught me that whenever I went shopping for a specific item, I would always end up frustrated.

This week, however, was different. After a relatively short wild goose chase, I found the proverbial golden egg. The shop in question was tucked away on one of Amman's busiest roads, completely overshadowed by the towering Radisson SAS hotel on the opposite side.

The lady who greets you is as unpretentious as the shop she has owned and managed for the past 27 years. Her name is Doris Ghneim, and you could see from first glance that her degree in 'Design and Dressmaking in Leather and Textiles' from her native Dusseldorf, West Germany, was well earned. Surrounded by the products that she and a very select number of personally trained employees have made, I could tell even with my layman's eye that both the leather and workmanship were of superior quality.

It was revelation time. Many years ago, my mother had refused to leave behind her leather suite in London, and I now realised why visitors would always compliment our leather clad living room. I had become familiar with what many tradesmen in this country pass off as real leather—if your cool summer frock sticks to your leather armchair, then it's not leather but plastic you're sitting on.

The hard part is convincing friends that my beautifully restored cushion was really upholstered in Jordan. Many thought it had winged its way from another country through the magic of Aramex or UPS.

It's not only home furnishings that Mrs Ghneim deals with. She designs and makes by hand every imaginable item in leather. You name it, she does it. And if she hasn't made it, just show her what you have in mind, and hey presto. An extremely trendy leather menu for an up market restaurant is one such example.

The less glamorous side is also repre-

sented. In 'The Leather Shop' you will find the belts and pistol pockets, as worn by our policemen and women every-

day. She also produces an extremely successful and impressive line in souvenirs. Coasters, wall-hangings and wal-

lets are amongst the items on sale. My attention was drawn to them when an American tourist came into the shop

and asked for a wallet with a particular arabesque motive. It turned out that a friend in Texas had advised him to get

Book of confusion

Alexandria's new library was to be a romantic reconstruction of past greatness. But Mark Huband sees it being consumed by self-deceit

A RANDOM array of letters and symbols from all the world's languages will be carved into a rough-hewn wall encircling the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. But it is a decorative conceit that captures both the aspiration Egypt has of its new library, as well as the growing confusion surrounding its purpose.

What started as a yearning for the romantic reconstruction of past greatness, and attracted a budget of \$167m from the Egyptian government, Unesco and other donors, is being consumed by self-deceit.

The purpose is to build a library which will evoke the Ancient Library of Alexandria, created by Ptolemy Soter, King of Egypt, during the late 4th century BC, said to have contained more than 500,000 texts from throughout the known world.

Teams of disolute-looking workmen pridge across the terraced concrete acres of the well-advanced, 63,000 sq metre construction site. Beyond the Alexandria Corniche, the Mediterranean sparkles.

As Egypt grapples with an increasingly confused role, the tionship with its heritage, the emergence of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina has come to be loaded with symbolism, not least in the fact that the new monumental edifice faces north, away from Egypt.

"It's as if there are two different [cultural] winds. One is from the Mediterranean, and the other is from the desert. From the sea, it's nice. From the desert, it's hot," says Kamal el-Zohery, director of the Great Cairo Library.

His sense of the currents of learning which have blown through Egypt is poignant. Egyptian culture used to be enriched by interaction. Today, this is no longer true. The cultural life sustained in Alexandria over many centuries drew its lifeblood from both constant exposure to other centres of learning in the ancient world Athens, Cos, Cyrene, Rome, Ephesus, Pergamon and also the openness and eclecticism of the Ptolemaic rule, during which it emerged as a centre of learning.

Similar interaction is today barely perceptible. Egypt's doors are not open. Censorship is routine, books are banned, newspapers are closed down, writers are threatened by Islamic extremists and occasionally forced into exile when the

state fails to protect them. Now, 72 journalists are threatened with joining two of their colleagues currently serving prison sentences.

Meanwhile, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina's \$1.5m annual book budget is intended to lead to the creation of a collection numbering 8m books by 2020, along with up to 4,000 newspapers and periodicals, 50,000 manuscripts and rare books, as well as 50,000 maps. Alongside the traditional collection, the library intends to amass up to 250,000 audio- and audiovisual aids, as well as establish-

Zohery. "All young researchers are the victims of taking from other researchers, rather than making up their own minds...There's a mental habit of listening and obeying." Nor is the Egyptian political elite seeking to improve the compliant state of the population. Though professing openness and opposition to religious extremism, the government is vulnerable to attack from Islamist organisations and has taken measures which assert its conservative credentials.

Among the more startling examples was a decision in

should have it. The principle for me is to spread the role of the library and spread enlightenment, and not to be a vanguard for ideas that aren't accepted by society."

In a society riddled with such contradictions, what is Egypt's purpose in creating the Bibliotheca Alexandrina? Mohsen Zahran refused to say whether Rodinson's book will appear upon its shelves. But his own writings hint at what the new library is really about. The library newsletter in March included an article entitled "Who Burned the Ancient Library of Alexandria?"

He wrote: "There have been several stories about the burning of the ancient library of Alexandria...The truth is that this library enclosed about 700,000 papyrus scrolls that were burned in the year 47BC, when Alexandria was under siege by Julius Caesar."

Scholars have debated for centuries what happened to the ancient library but Zahran's version is worryingly simplistic, intended merely to prove the library was destroyed by Romans rather than Arabs.

Less propagandistic accounts of the ancient library's fate suggest a more complex history. In fact, there were at least three libraries in Alexandria, according to the US scholar Ellen Brundage.

Ptolemy Soter's ambition was to amass a collection to include all the written works of the known world. After 245BC, 120,000 scrolls were catalogued by Callimachus of Cyrene, who became librarian that year.

According to Seneca, Julius Caesar inadvertently set alight a book storage depot close to Alexandria harbour when he was under siege by Cleopatra's brother Achilles in the city in 47BC. He is not said to have deliberately set the library ablaze, and the book store did not contain more than a fraction of the library collection.

An alternative account is given by three Arab scholars, who appear more able to accept the possibility of their nation's blame for the destruction than their descendants.

While there is real debate over why these institutions disappeared, the modern sponsors of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina are keen to shape history to raise their project beyond the mere building of a prestige institution. As its role appears increasingly at odds with what was originally intended, it has

"We are reviving the idea of excellence in research and education.... We need the elimination of the past. Not because of the past, but because the past is over."

Mohsen Zahran, executive director of library project

ing links to overseas computer databases and permanent internet access.

"The library will provide excellence in knowledge. Excellence in human attempts to discover [it], and use evolving ideas and approaches to deal with whole factors and challenges to man in various fields," says Mohsen Zahran, executive director of the government department within the higher education ministry that is overseeing the project. "To be convinced of the ideals upon which the concept is based requires a serious leap of faith. While all the world's languages will be represented on the wall in the form of individual characters as a sign of the building's supposed global reach, the assembled letters will intentionally make no sense at all."

The purpose of knowledge will be far from defined, while the creative value of the activities planned for the interior will reflect the crisis now wracking Egypt's education system.

This system has for decades crushed individual inquiry. Egyptian parents with sufficient wealth fight hard to secure their children places at independent private schools; they hope this will spare them the mindless rigidity of rote-learning which forms the basis of state education.

"The younger generation is imprisoned," says Kamal el-

May to ban use of a biography of the Moslem Prophet Mohammed, by the widely respected French author Maxime Rodinson. The book had been available to students at the American University in Cairo since soon after its publication in English in 1971.

Salah Montasser, a commentator on the government daily newspaper Al-Ahram, took exception. In an article entitled "A Book That Must Be Stopped", he claimed it insulted Islam on 50 counts. Moustaf Shihab, minister of higher education, immediately demanded the book be withdrawn, without debate of the kind supposedly enshrined in the institutions his ministry oversees, which include the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

"This is a contradiction in the minds of those in positions of responsibility," said another Al-Ahram commentator, Salama Ahmed Salama. "It shows that our educational philosophy is on the wrong track, and will produce a generation of intellectual cripples. This [ban] has reinforced extremism."

His views are rare. "I wouldn't like to have Rodinson's book. His book is a red flag," said Abdel Raouf el-Reedi, director of the Mubarak Public Library in Cairo and a former Egyptian ambassador to the United Nations. "Since it's become a problem and a symbol of anti-religion, I'm not going to be a hero and say I

become necessary to alter the founding principles. "We are not emulating the ancient library. It's not a matter of emulation. It's a locomotive for development," Zahran now says. "We are reviving the idea of excellence in research and education...We need the elimination of the past. Not because of the past, but because the past is over." The elimination of the past is hardly a foundation upon which to build a centre of learning. But what of a more contemporary role, which offers something to the modern Middle East?

The vast circular presence of the library on the coastal edge of Alexandria has brought the symbolic nature of the emerging structure into sharp focus. "The circular shape is a symbol of the totality of the world's knowledge

and the universe of books," says Christoph Kapeller, the Austrian architect whose Norway-based company, Snohetta Arkitektur Landskap, saw off 523 rivals in an international competition to design the library.

"It needed to be monumental, drawing on the architectural history of Egypt. The building doesn't relate to Alexandria. The building, when completed in late-1998, will look magnificent. The size of the bookshelves is the basic unit of the entire design, with the size of books therefore the basic unit of the building. For the architect, the relationship between the micro detail and the already imposing edifice is indivisible.

The 32 metre-high building is an elliptical cylinder cut as

a wedge and tilted forward. The future is symbolised by the two-thirds of the building that is above ground level, consigning the past 2,000 years to below ground. An imaginative use of light, facilitated by a complex arrangement of skylights which form the disk-like roof, will exploit natural light while deflecting the harsh noon sun.

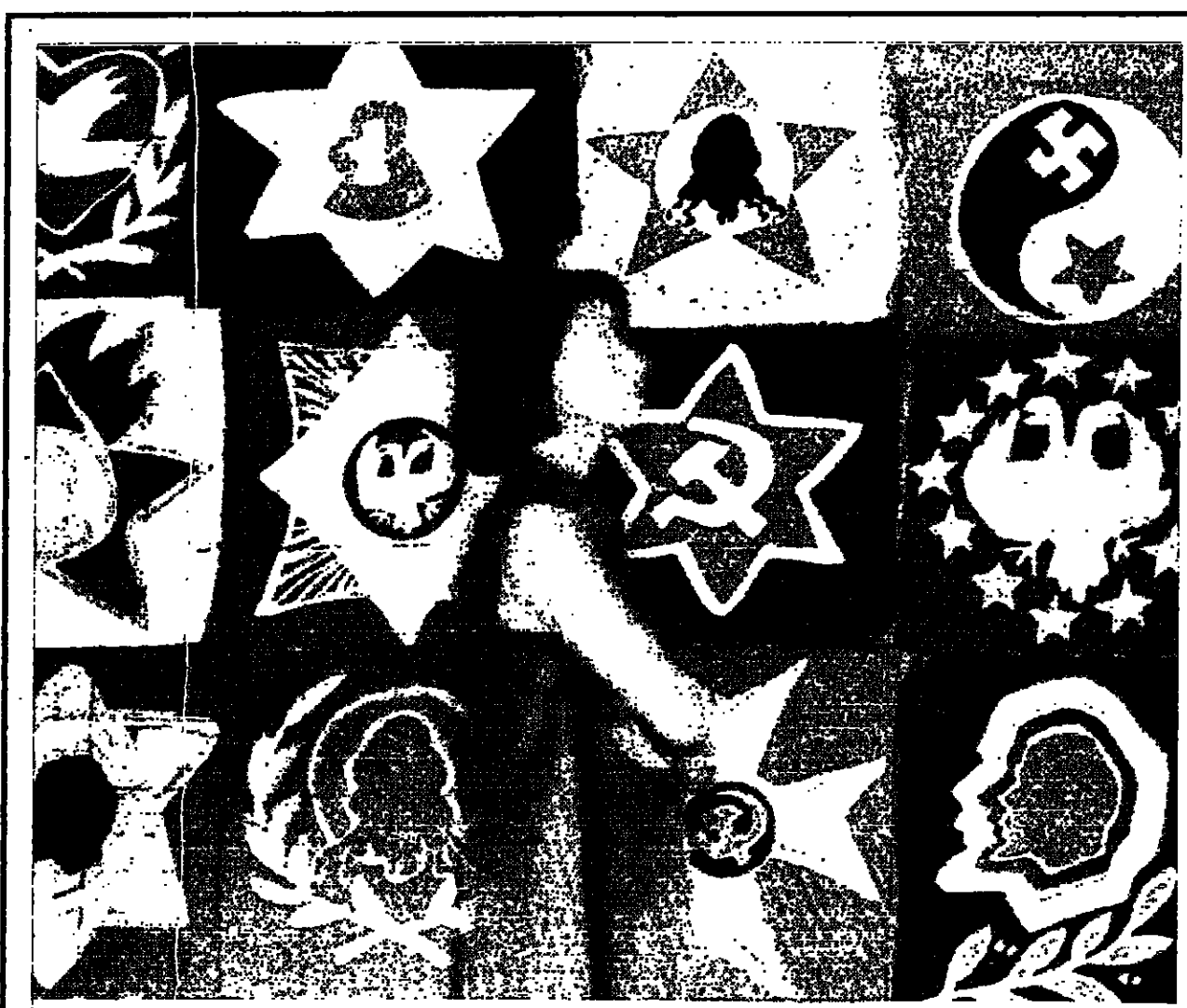
While Zahran envisages the library as a resource centre for the study of Mediterranean civilisation, others are calling for it to function as a statistical centre providing economic data. So will it be a library or a museum? Reconciling the model of the ancient library with modern needs is the greatest challenge facing the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Within the present climate, controversy is likely

to be banished from the bookshelves.

Will researchers be allowed to read the works of Maxime Rodinson? Will the views expressed by the imprisoned journalists be included in the collection of media material? Will planned access to the worldwide web be unrestricted?

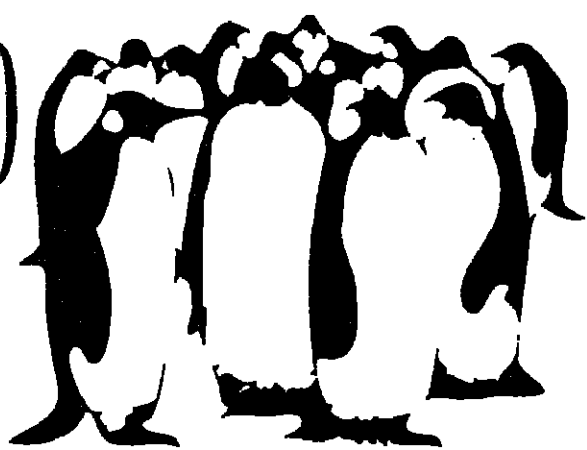
In a climate in which the loudest shout appears always to win the day, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina is unlikely to be either a museum or a library. Instead, it will be a temple to all that is "accepted by society", a far cry from being the "hothouse of knowledge" that those who conceived the project deceived themselves into believing it might have become.

Financial Times Syndication



A visitor walks past the poster "New Heraldry of Russia" by modernist artist Marina Koldobskaya during an international exhibition 3 August. More than 200 artists from 15 countries presented their avant-garde creations to the public.

Reuters

AROUND
TOWN

Roll on Fuheis

UNDER the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Al Fuheis Cultural Festival will start on 13 August under the banner "Jordan, history and civilization."

Ayman Samawi, director of the festival, told a press conference last Monday that the festival, in its 9th session, will have many distinguished features both from Jordan and abroad. Prominent Arab singers George Wasef and Nawal Zughbi, from Syria and Lebanon respectively, promise to put in spectacular performances.

National, regional and international singers and musical troupes are taking part in the festival. The festival will also have its regular cultural sites, including its "Arab City Corner", which this year will include Baghdad. The Fuheis Festival lasts till 21 August.



Proving that a little love goes a long way

Multi-national performers, the Family International Group, spoke to The Star's reporter Ghassan Joha about their mission to bring a little happiness to children living in difficult circumstances



run at the invitation of the UNRWA in the Palestinian refugee camps, and at charity occasions for many local cultural, educational and child care institutions. These programs have grown from being simple classes for handicapped and kindergarten children, into a series of workshops in the camps and around the country, through a major well-known local NGO. The group also participates in personal seminars for teachers and educators, which provide an opportunity for the latter to improve their skills in carrying out their important responsibilities in society.

The group's other activities include organizing and distributing aid to the refugee camps and rehabilitation centers, and running entertainment programs both in Arabic and English. These activities could not be achieved without donations and sponsors.

The FI group follows a hard training schedule to perform to the highest standard. "On obtaining the required dances for our shows, we spend almost a month, eight hours a day, practicing a whole performance," explained Florence. The dances and songs are selected and performed under the supervision of a skillful staff of musicians, composers and dance instructors, including artists Yasser Masri and Mohammed Sameer, along with the group's Swedish dance instructor Sarah.

Most of the group members live in Jordan and in other countries in the region. David spent his last five years in Amman where he really enjoyed life. "The Jordanian people are very generous and delightful. Here you can feel stability and security," Maria, on the other hand, lives in the West Bank city of Beit Jalla, where she shares the difficult conditions of everyday life with the Palestinians there. Bringing joy to people in these situations is, however, the group's main objective and is no doubt an incentive to continue their good work.

"It's really encouraging when you feel that your tremendous enthusiasm spreads to the children and to the people," said Florence, adding that "feeling happy is good, but making others feel happy is great."

The group is currently performing in the Palestinian territories of Gaza and the West Bank. They will return to the Kingdom later this month to perform in the Fuheis festival.

aims to reach everyone, to offer them the hope of life and faith," David, from England, a singer in the group, told The Star.

He added that all members of the multi-national group are breaking down national and cultural barriers and are working towards a common goal—to bring joy to people in the region who grieve and face difficulties because of wars or political differences. Members of the group come from the US, European and other countries.

During this year's Jerash festival, the group have fascinated the audience with their remarkable chanting and dance routines covering the most famous Arab songs, accompanied by live music from the band 'Heart to Heart', which has also participated in a number of festivals in the region including Palestine, India and South East Asia.

Florence, a cheerful lady from Denmark, has another point of view. "The group depends on educational procedures to teach the spirit of team work and social values to children," she said that everyone in the group has the will to give and share good things with the people, adding, "How nice to feel proud of giving when the emotions truly come from the heart."

The 15-member group is setting up many programs for children to instill in them a sense of goodwill and good morals.

"Every child needs to feel special to someone," she said. A recent survey of children aged 10-11 years in the United States revealed that

the one thing that upset them the most was spending too little time with their parents.

Dr George Benson, an American professor in child's sociology, once said, "Great ideas and fine principles do not survive from generation to generation just because they are good, nor because they have been carefully legislated. Ideals and principles carry on only when they are built into the hearts of children as they grow up." The FI are a living example of this philosophy. They actively try to pass on positive family values to children and spend quality time with them. Maria, a member from Switzerland says, "The world is full of beauty when hearts are full of love."

Most of the group's educational programs are



YOU CAN feel a lot of love, concern and happiness in the chanting and dance routines of the Family International Group (FI). Now in their fifth year the group continues to bring encouragement, comfort and hope to people of all ages with their voluntary performances.

All members of the talented group have dedicated their lives to work side by side with specialists and experts. They have participated in many cultural events and musical performances, not forgetting the annual Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts, where they participated this year for the fourth time.

Founded in Jordan, the group is made up of full time volunteers and has been operating in the Middle East since 1994. "The FI's work

Stars of Jerash



Elias Karam is one of the most distinctive singers in the Arab world with his unique voice. Coming all the way from Syria he has captivated the Jerash crowd. Despite the fact that he was one of the last of his concerts, he very quickly developed a rapport with the audience. He is well-known for his love of music. He told the crowd how pleased he was to be performing at this huge festival at the "gateway to the world". On the second night, his performance was interrupted by a power cut, but the night was still a memorable one.



Say cheese! JTV presenter Rania Asaad (left), and Ikhlas Yakhloof pose for the camera.

India, the legend

AMMAN (Star)—INDIA, a country of art, beauty, culture and civilization. The homeland of Mahatma Gandhi, a fascinating country now on display at the Indian Photo Exhibition at the Royal Cultural Center. The exhibition was opened this week by the Indian Ambassador to Jordan H.C.S. Dhody and the Minister of Social Development, Mohammad Khair Mamsar. It includes 61 photos portraying Indian independence and her growing prosperity over the last 50 years.

Nature is a dominant theme in the first section, which features the snow capped summit one of the highest mountains in the world in the Himalayas. This contrasts with images of glowing desert sands that are beautifully displayed.

Other pictures depict the different religions in India. Today 80 percent of the population is classified as Hindu. Muslims are the largest religious minority, forming 15 percent of the people.

There are also pieces that depict developments in agriculture, conveying the importance of this sector, which feeds India's huge population.

Pictures of India's extensive railway system display the importance of this form of transport to



Indian Ambassador H.C.S. Dhody with ministers at the opening ceremony

the people. However, it is the image of Mahatma Gandhi, considered as the father of Indian independence, that takes pride of place in the exhibition. It also reflects importance of art in Indian society as a whole.

Cinema is also a widely recognized art form that is honoured in

this varied exhibition. The Indian film industry goes back to the early years of this century. India's Hollywood is Bombay (Mumbai), known fondly as Bollywood. As well as feature films, India also produces a large number of documentaries in all its languages. The exhibit continues till 8 August.



Photo by Khalil Masri

Egyptian actress Sawwan Badr makes her debut at the Jerash Festival. She is starring with Egyptian actors Yahya Al Fakhrani and Mohammed Mulawali in the play, Al Tayeb wal Sharir (The Good and The Bad).



Photo by Mohammed Sharaf

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 6—13 August

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

THURSDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Animated Hero Classics (Cartoon)
3:30—Animal Park (Cartoon)
4:00—L'École Des Fans
4:30—Blue Water Dreaming (Documentary)
5:00—NBA
6:15—Sliders
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters (Com)
8:00—Great Romances of the 20th Century
8:30—Dr Quinn Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Film: "The Night Before"
12:00—Can't Harry Love

FRIDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin (Cart)
3:30—The Borrowers
4:00—Film: "Fire Over England"
6:15—Les Cles De Fort Boyard (Quiz)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Life on the Digital Edge
8:30—Understanding Computing
9:10—Babyion 5
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—When Love Kills (Mini Series, pt.2 of 2)

SATURDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Family Dog (Cartoon)
3:30—Clowning Around



Cinema, Cinema, Saturday at 8:00 pm.

4:00—Neighbours (Drama)
4:30—Scandi Nature (Doc.)
5:00—French Prog
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prim (Talk Show)
9:10—Sirens (Drama)
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film: "Stalked"
12:00—Country Music

SUNDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:20—Pumpkin Patch



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): The Man in the Iron Mask
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Al Za'em (Arabic)
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Al Za'em (Arabic)
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Al Za'em (Arabic)
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Al Za'em (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): A Letter to the Governor
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Dracula

FILM

Writer Takes on 'Lethal' Challenge

By Greg Braxton

HOLLYWOOD—Channing Gibson is celebrating Christmas this summer.

That's good news, because during last year's Christmas season, the screenwriter of "Lethal Weapon 4" was feeling more heat than holiday cheer.

It was during that period that Gibson (no relation to Mel), an acclaimed television writer and producer, met with producer-director Richard Donner and Warner Bros. chairman Terry Semel about his still-unfinished script for the fourth installment of the popular comedy-action franchise that was scheduled to start a frenzied shooting schedule in only a few weeks.

"I remember Terry looking at me, and I thought, 'What must be going through his mind?' " recalled Gibson, who had never written a major feature before, much less a \$120 million to \$150 million chapter of one of the studio's most important film series.

Gibson was also a newcomer to the franchise, which has a reliable core group of Donner, producer Joel Silver and stars Mel Gibson and Danny Glover. And skeptics had argued that "Lethal Weapon" was an aging franchise well past its prime. "Richard and Terry both looked at me and said, 'We're counting on you,'" said Gibson. "Then they added, 'You're not planning to leave town this Christmas, are you?'"

But despite his ruined holiday and a wildly paced four-month shooting schedule that not only started without a completed script but that often found Gibson frantically churning out pages for that day's shooting on the set, the producers were more than happy with the results. And now Gibson is enjoying the fruits of his labors. In its first two weekends, "Lethal Weapon 4" shot up around \$72 million and is on its way to becoming one of the summer's big hits. In spite of brickbats thrown at the movie by some critics who felt the film was a tired, explosion-filled cliché continuation, its success has prompted some whispered talk about the possibility of "Lethal Weapon 5."

"This has been a huge break for me," said Gibson, who is the polar opposite of the blustery larger-than-life personas of Donner, producer Silver, Mel Gibson and others who have nursed the "Lethal Weapon" movies from the beginning. On the day of the film's release, he arose early in the morning to play a quiet game of golf—although at times he imagined the ball as the head of one particular critic who hated the movie.

"Lots of doors are breaking down, and I'm being offered a lot of new projects," said Gibson, though he declined to be more specific. "This has been more than wonderful."

Donner cannot stop singing Gibson's praises. "I was so totally impressed with him," said Donner in an interview from Barcelona, where the film was having a gala premiere.

"I liked his humor and he was really quick on his feet," Donner continued. "We gave him the basic premise, and his approach was phenomenally on the nose."

More importantly, he said, Gibson said he was most proud of accomplishing his and Donner's goal on "Lethal Weapon 4," which was to bring more humanity and emotion to the action-oriented franchise, which is not exactly known for its high quality of plot and character development.

The "Lethal Weapon" movies are anchored by the police detective team of Martin Riggs and Roger Murtagh (Gibson and Glover), who lace their heroics with comic banter. In the first "Lethal Weapon" in 1987, Riggs was a borderline psychotic who at one point puts a gun in his mouth as if he were going to commit suicide.

Said Donner: "These characters were created by Shane Black, and no one had captured them to the degree that he had. As the series developed, we lost those characters a little, and we wanted to go back and catch them. In 'Lethal Weapon' movies, everything comes down to character. When we saw what Channing had, we thought, 'This guy is a genius.'" Gibson learned about "Lethal Weapon 4" through Donner and Silver, whom he was acquainted with through his rewrites on other Silver-produced scripts. Last summer, Gibson was one of several writers contacted to move full steam ahead on the project, which was put on the front burner because of a sudden vacancy in Mel Gibson's schedule. Only about one-quarter of the shooting script was finished when the film went into production Jan. 15.

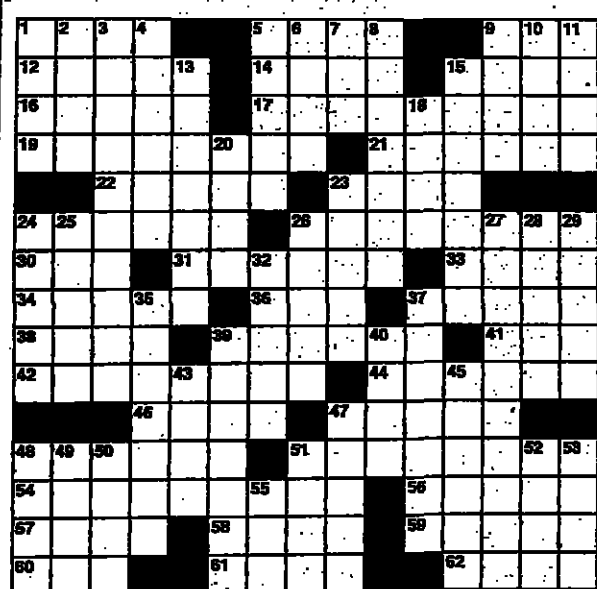
The late addition of hot comedian Chris Rock posed more twists for Gibson and the collaborators. And there were days when Gibson was writing so furiously that there wasn't time to second-guess what he was doing.

Donner and Gibson also lauded the cast, which at times would spin off on improvisational riffs. "When you have actors as good as these people are, and they have a good screenplay and a good scene, they start to improvise," Donner said. "Channing was there the whole shoot, and he stayed with us, was never upset by the improv. He was one of a million." As for "Lethal Weapon 5," Gibson said he had not been approached. "But I would love to do it," he said.

Said Donner of "Lethal Weapon 5": "We'll see. But if there is one, Channing Gibson is the one we want."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Rhine leader
5 Male party
9 Short haircut
12 Willow
14 Ponder
15 Source of the Blue Nile
16 Fish
17 Raises
18 Cabinet
19 Wood
21 Certain insects
22 Skin protuberances
23 Bug
24 Fall
26 Guiding principle
30 Climbing plant
31 Crows
33 "A" clock
34 Cypriotes
36 Recurve
37 Viral disease

DOWN
2 Wrecker
3 Certain robots
4 Put in more
5 Rotates
6 Theater
7 Jeanne d'
8 Cousins of the mouse
9 Headquarters
10 Doozy
11 Opera voice
13 Flies
15 Is attracted by
18 Inland
20 Italian commune
21 Castle
23 adjoints
25 Call to mind
26 Fourth estate
27 Medium
28 Duzo flavoring
29 Haley work
30 "It's J"
32 Voraciousness
33 Web-footed bird
34 Brightens
35 Addict
36 "A" of Two Cities
37 Hardcore youth
38 Netherlands city (with "The")
39 Flies
40 Israeli airline
41 Brood of pheasants
42 SGL, e.g.
43 Slangy negative
44 Eddie Island
45 Ooze
46 Comment from the sea

This Week's - HOROSCOPES

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is in Leo, perfect for sports activities and public speaking. Leo is the sign of the entertainer.

Aries (March 21-April 19). You're at your most powerful. Travel and romance look excellent, but just about everything will go well.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Money is tight. Don't go too far into debt to get a household item. Make a distant contact by phone.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). A friendly competition keeps you stirred up. Even if you lose a few rounds, you're learning a lot.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Work you do brings more attention and possibly more money. You'll gain education and it costs more than you make on it now.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You're looking particularly excellent. You'll attract a lot of admiration. Deal with it wisely. Don't let it go to your head.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Ask a foreign friend's advice to solve a domestic puzzle. The outside perspective will be a big help.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Get friends to join you for an even more successful learning experience. Stick close to home. Looks like somebody there needs your attention.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). An older person has big plans for you but they may not quite fit your picture. Better speak up or you could get volunteered for something you don't want to do.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You may surprise even yourself with an outrageous idea. Share it with a foreign friend and the two of you might make it happen.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You can tell your boss what to do and probably get away with it. Be direct with your partner in a loving way.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Friends can help you find the perfect job or the perfect way to do the one you have. An older person puts pressure on you to take action.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Cater to an older person's whims. Your attentions will prove profitable but you're also making new friends.

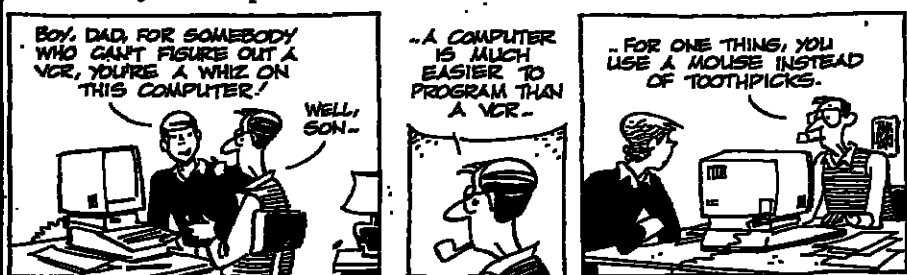
If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Your experience really pays off this year. Use what you've already learned plus the coaching of a dear friend to get the career you want.

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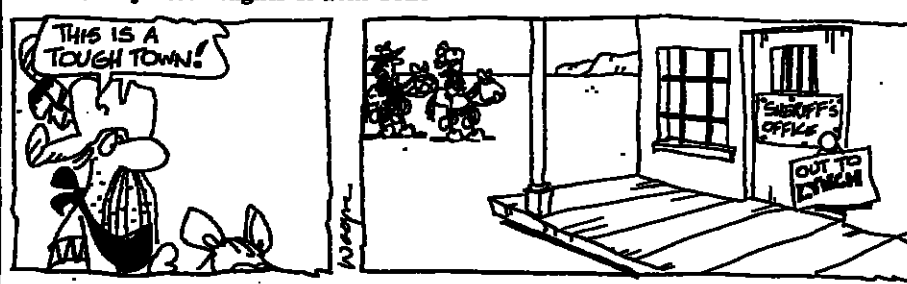
PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



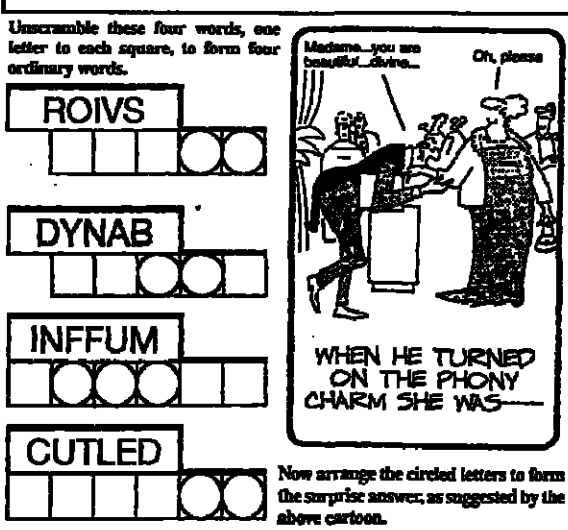
ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble



Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Print answer here: _____

TURNED OFF

ANSWERS: VISOR BANDY MUFFIN DULCET

Would You Believe...

Invention of the scissors can be attributed to Leonardo da Vinci.

The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes in Alaska was named after all the geysers it contains.

Only 72 episodes of the original "Star Trek" TV show were made.

In India, playing cards are round.

Anne of Cleves was married to Henry VIII for only six months before he divorced her.

During his lifetime, Russian composer Alexander Borodin considered himself a chemistry professor first and a musician second.

CHARLIE



"...It's gonna take a little longer than I thought. Tony fell asleep."

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Éclaboussures

Changeons les règles du jeu

Depuis plus d'un mois, les Jordaniens vivent une crise de confiance vis-à-vis de leur gouvernement. À l'origine de la goutte d'eau de trop, deux scandales majeurs.

Le premier a éclaté à la mi-juin lorsque, choqués, les Jordaniens apprennent que les taux de croissance économique du pays ne dépassaient pas le 1% en 1996 et 1997. Or, le gouvernement affirmait que ces taux étaient de l'ordre de 5%. Pourquoi et qui sont les responsables de ces mensonges ? Pas de réponses claires.

Le second est plus grave (voir article ci-contre) puisqu'il s'agit de la contamination de l'eau de la capitale, dont souffrent des centaines de milliers de gens depuis bientôt trois semaines. Le député (Salameh Hani) qui préside la commission de l'agriculture et de l'eau de la Chambre, affirme ne pas avoir reçu de réponses satisfaisantes de la part de l'exécutif sur les raisons de cette pollution.

Face aux interrogations croissantes de l'opinion publique, le gouvernement s'est enfoncé dans une certaine condescendance. Alors la colère est montée d'un cran : le député Ghazi al-Fayez a demandé au Premier ministre de démissionner et que le Procureur général s'empare des dossiers de l'eau, de la croissance économique et de la corruption. Car, selon lui, le comportement du gouvernement est la preuve de son mépris à l'égard du peuple. Pour toute réponse, le Premier ministre a renvoyé la lettre du député mécontent, sans même l'ouvrir !

En réalité, ces deux affaires mettent en valeur le mécanisme de la prise de décision dans ce pays. Selon les textes de la Constitution, c'est le boulot du pouvoir exécutif qui est en contre-partie responsable devant le Parlement. Dans les faits, le pouvoir exécutif est tout-puissant et omniprésent. L'intervention des citoyens qu'elle soit directe ou par le biais de la Chambre des députés est très limitée. Certes, le peuple peut exprimer son opinion dans diverses associations sur des questions majeures, comme la normalisation avec Israël mais dans la plupart des cas, sa voix est ignorée. L'actualité jordanienne de ces deux dernières années fourmille de preuves.

La semaine dernière, un journaliste, non sans une pointe de sarcasme, a proposé aux ministres français de venir en stage à Amman afin d'apprendre de leurs collègues jordaniens comment sortir indemne des affaires de corruption même les plus compliquées. Le journaliste évoquait le scandale du sang contaminé qui, plus de dix ans après les faits, est encore à la une des journaux français.

Alors que faire ? Nous nous acharnons vers une situation où les gouvernants deviennent incapables de gouverner et où les gouvernés n'admettent plus qu'on ignore systématiquement leurs désirs et leurs intérêts. Pour éviter le pire, il est urgent de se mettre d'accord sur de nouvelles règles du jeu démocratique. Les gouvernants devraient céder au peuple une partie de leur pouvoir et de leurs prérogatives pour parvenir à un équilibre entre les deux parties. Il n'est dit nulle part qu'un gouvernement est à l'abri de la corruption et de l'erreur. Mais il faut alors avoir les moyens de les corriger et de rendre des comptes au peuple. La réforme politique est impérative car « le changement de gouvernement n'est pas suffisant », comme l'ont dit plusieurs commentateurs.

Suleiman Sweiss



Dans les centres aérés, les enfants ont l'occasion de découvrir de nouvelles activités.

Il y a ceux qui partent à l'étranger et il y a les autres.

ceux qui n'ont pas les moyens de se payer un billet d'avion mais assez d'argent pour envoyer leurs bambins profiter de jolies vacances en groupe. Certains choisissent la Cité sportive qui propose diverses activités en juillet et en août pour les 6-14 ans. « Le nombre d'enfants que nous accueillons a diminué par rapport à 1997 mais, assure le directeur Abdel Rauf Saad, il ne s'agit pas d'une désaffection, au contraire. Nous préférons avoir moins de participants pour mieux travailler avec eux ». Objectif principal de la session d'été : enseigner aux enfants le sens de la discipline avec des sports très exigeants tels que la gymnastique, la natation ou le football. En revanche, les deux autres clubs que nous avons visités, ont observé une notable augmentation de leurs effectifs cette année. Le YWCA (Youth Women Christian Association), qui fête cette année son cinquantième anniversaire, organise chaque été des camps. Huit à douze jours pendant lesquels les enfants restent loin de leurs familles et découvrent l'astrologie, l'art et

la nature. Deux semaines d'indépendance et de communauté puisque, comme chez les



Pendant les camps, les jeunes apprennent à vivre en communauté. Ils partagent aussi bien les activités culturelles et sportives que les corvées, notamment la mise en place de la tente, un sommet du séjour.

Eau polluée

Sur les traces du goût et de l'odeur
Avant de couler de nos robinets, l'eau d'Amman a des origines multiples. Conduite dans un canal ouvert à tous les liquides, elle est ensuite traitée par la mystérieuse usine de Zai. Mais, trois semaines après le début de la polémique, le lac de Tibériade reste toujours en accusation.

Au détour d'un virage,

l'eau semble jaillir de la montagne. Il ne s'agit pas d'une libre adaptation d'un récit de la Bible mais simplement de la rivière du Yarmouk qui se jette dans le Canal du Roi Abdullah (KAC), construit au pied d'une colline à quelques kilomètres en contre-bas d'Um Qais. Son cours est paisible mais, à l'œil nu, paraît bien sale. Un peu plus loin, des eaux très claires au contraire, se déversent comme un torrent dans le même canal. Ce sont des eaux souterraines, généralement de très bonne qualité. Puis encore un check-point (la frontière israélienne n'est pas loin), un ou deux kilomètres et le canal croise les eaux du lac de Tibériade, situé en territoire hébreu. Depuis les accords de paix signés avec la Jordanie en 1993, Israël est censé fournir au royaume hachémite, jusqu'à 50 millions de mètres cubes d'eau en provenance de ce lac. Actuellement, elle n'en livre que 25 millions qui alimentent donc le canal. En comparaison, la rivière du Yarmouk y déverse au total 110 millions de mètres cubes par an.

À ce moment de notre petite balade, nous sommes au tout début du KAC. Celui-ci se poursuit pendant plus de 40 kilomètres à ciel ouvert jusqu'à la station de pompage dans les environs de Deir Alla. L'eau sera ensuite acheminée à la station de traitement de Zai avant de retrouver les foyers d'Amman. Tout au long de ce parcours, le canal reçoit les eaux de plusieurs wadis qui croisent son chemin.

Bref, toutes les hypothèses sont possibles et parmi toutes ces alimentations du KAC, il semble bien difficile de déterminer les origines de la mauvaise odeur et du goût désagréable de l'eau d'Amman. Pourtant, selon un rapport de la Société scientifique royale, le coupable serait le lac de Tibériade. Ce rapport, publié dans le *Doustour* cette semaine, montre que les eaux du lac contiennent un taux anormalement élevé d'algues. Quelques jours auparavant, le ministre de l'eau, Munther Haddadin, avait reconnu que « l'algue trouvée dans les ressources en eau était en augmentation à cause de la chaleur et était à l'origine de la couleur et du goût diffé-

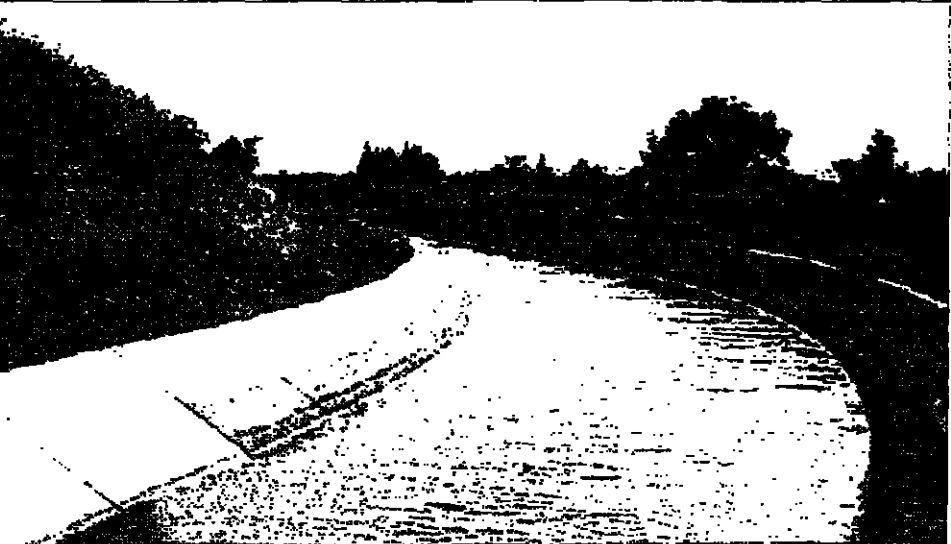
rents de l'eau ». Puis il avait fait l'aveu d'une « erreur humaine » au niveau de l'usine de traitement de Zai. Ces explications n'ont pas satisfait les députés. La commission parlementaire de l'agriculture et de l'eau s'est saisie du rapport de la Société scientifique royale, a conclu que la station de Zai n'avait pas les moyens de traiter des eaux exagérément polluées (à cause du lac de Tibériade) et a exigé la démission du ministre, ainsi que celle du secrétaire général de la WAJ (Water Authority of Jordan) et leur comparution devant la justice.

Les députés estiment notamment que, si erreur humaine il y avait eu, elle aurait été corrigée au moment de la relève régulière des effectifs.

Un expert indépendant évoque néanmoins une autre hypothèse et parle de déficience des « filtres de carbone », chargés justement d'éliminer les mauvais goûts et odeurs.

Une proposition qui nous ramène directement sur le fonctionnement de la station de traitement de Zai, décidément au cœur de la polémique.

Le Jourdain



Parmi les principales sources d'alimentation du Canal, la rivière du Yarmouk (110 millions de mètres cubes), les eaux souterraines (25) et le lac de Tibériade (25).

Dernier chic libanais : le beau numéro de plaque

● Rouler en grosse cylindrée à Beyrouth n'est rien pour certains si on n'a pas la plaque minéralogique qui va avec. La majorité des voitures circulant au Liban ont des numéros à sept chiffres écrits en français et en arabe (voir photo). Mais l'obsession de se singulariser a provoqué ces dernières années une ruée sur les « numéros-que-personne-n'a ». Un numéro de voiture à quatre ou cinq chiffres est déjà bien et peut valoir plusieurs milliers de dollars pour peu qu'il soit un peu spécial : un nombre « rond » (25.000), des chiffres allant par paire (22.33) ou se suivant. Mais le must est les rarissimes trois chiffres inscrits en relief sur une plaque noire scintillante. On atteint alors des prix vertigineux : de 15.000 minimum à 30.000 dollars. Il y a aussi les plaques plus politiques, par exemple celles qui commencent par 5 : on sait alors que le propriétaire est en très bons termes avec le ministère de l'Intérieur. « C'est fou ! Plus de 80% des gens qui vont à la préfecture pour enregistrer une voiture neuve disent tous la même chose : « Si il vous plaît, donnez-moi un beau numéro », raconte Ali, un robuste barbu d'une trentaine d'années, qui s'est fait une spécialité du commerce des plaques depuis des années. Un « beau numéro », c'est par exemple celui d'un ancien ministre qui a payé 30.000 dollars, rien que pour avoir le numéro 535 sur sa BMW 535. « Un client m'a demandé une fois de lui dédicacer le numéro 5258, son année de naissance et celle de sa femme. Je l'ai trouvé et il m'a payé 3.000 dollars », se souvient encore Ali, le chasseur de plaques. Mais ce petit commerce pourrait bien finir avec une nouvelle loi : d'ici peu toutes les voitures seront dotées d'un numéro à 6 chiffres plus une lettre pour chacune des régions administratives. On ne pourra plus vendre une plaque sans la voiture et, pour continuer à parader dans les rues avec leurs chères plaques, les Libanais devront en faire la demande officielle.



Loisirs

Le temps de la pause parentale

L'été est là. Les enfants sont en vacances et bourrés d'énergie. Que faire pour éviter qu'ils tournent en rond à la maison ? Un moyen de s'en débarrasser sans mauvaise conscience : les centres aérés.

scouts en France, les enfants montent eux-mêmes leur tente et sont divisés en groupes de quatre avec un leader.

Cela coûte cher

Le très sélect Club orthodoxe est plus orienté vers le sport : « Nous voulons développer les aptitudes physiques des enfants », affirme Rajai Nafa, membre du comité du club, « c'est vrai que pour nous le sport est essentiel mais nous accordons aussi beaucoup d'importance à l'aspect culturel avec des cours de musique et chaque semaine

des visites dans les différentes usines du pays ».

Par ailleurs, cette même Raja estime que les centres d'été permettent aux parents d'avoir un peu plus de temps à eux, notamment les mères qui, traditionnellement, pendant l'année scolaire, s'occupent de l'éducation des enfants. « Imaginez-vous cinq enfants, pleins d'énergie, qui courent partout dans la maison et la maman qui doit tout ranger et préparer le repas car le mari va rentrer. Alors si on a l'opportunité de les envoyer dans des centres,

pourquoi pas ! », témoigne Lina, une mère de famille qui a mis ses quatre fils à la Cité sportive. « Et puis c'est bien pour eux car ils apprennent beaucoup de choses que nous ne pouvons pas leur enseigner », ajoute-t-elle.

Malheureusement, ce privilège, car c'est un privilège, n'est pas accessible à toutes les bourses, loin s'en faut. Pour deux mois passés à la Cité sportive, cela coûte 45 JD par enfant. Au Club orthodoxe, 40 JD (pour les non-adhérents) et 150 JD pour participer au camp du

YWCA. Celui-ci offre bien des places gratuites aux enfants les plus défavorisés, choisis en fonction de leurs bons résultats scolaires. Mais les heureux élus sont limités. Certes, les familles peuvent se rabattre sur les activités offertes par les écoles qui restent ouvertes pendant l'été. C'est moins cher mais le prix reste élevé : entre dix et vingt dinars. « Je n'ai pas d'argent pour ça », confie Oum Mahmoud, une Égyptienne, femme

de ménage à la Cité sportive, nous préférons utiliser l'argent pour acheter de la nourriture ou payer l'électricité ou l'eau. Il faut déjà pour le transport vingt dinars pour les chips et les bonbons, car ils ont les mêmes désirs que les autres enfants ».

Amineh Ishtay

Un mois en Colombie

« Quelle aventure ! ». Pour tous les participants et en particulier les enfants, ce voyage en Colombie a été inoubliable. CISV (Children International Summer Village) est une association étrangère qui a commencé à travailler en Jordanie en 1982. Elle offre à quatre enfants l'opportunité de vivre un mois différent, coupé de leurs racines. Pour les choisir, l'association a organisé un minicamp pendant dix jours. « Nous voulions tester leur caractère, leur comportement loin des parents », explique l'un des moniteurs. Ensuite, ils ont tiré au sort parmi les pays qui les invitaient et où la CISV possède une antenne : la Colombie est sortie du chapeau. Au total, plus de trente enfants, de toutes nationalités, se sont retrouvés cet été à Bogota, la capitale colombienne, après un voyage de deux jours. Bien entendu, ce fut une expérience enrichissante. « Les enfants ont appris des phrases dans différentes langues, ils ont goûté des plats typiques et tous les soirs, ils expliquaient au groupe les traditions et les coutumes de leur pays avec des costumes et des danses », raconte Lara qui a accompagné les quatre jeunes Jordaniens dans leur périple.

Ce fut aussi un temps de partage entre des gosses d'origines diverses : partage des activités de la ferme où ils étaient logés et des corvées. « À deux, ils devaient ranger leur chambre, insiste Lara, cela peut paraître dérisoire mais ainsi, les enfants comprennent le sens de la solidarité ».

A. L.

Les bons plans du weekend de shawarmas



Le Festival... était en réalité une partie du spectacle de Zai... Les groupes folkloriques de danse arabe ou étrangère se succèdent sur scène jusqu'à ce qu'on dirait improvisée, devant un public ravi de profiter enfin d'un spectacle gratuit.

Des couples se tranquillement assis sur des pierres plates et observent avec leurs enfants les détails de chacun des costumes pittoresques qui s'avancent. Les sandwichs vendus sur place sont délicieusement chauds. Les mères les plus prévoyantes en ont déjà préparés chez elles. Les autres doivent déboursier : 1 dinar le shawarma contre 250 fils en ville. « Certains jours, il m'arrive de gagner plus de 1000 JD, se vante le marchand, les passants ne peuvent ignorer la bonne odeur de viande grillée. Alors je n'ai pas l'intention de baisser mes prix, j'espère que je suis le seul à avoir sur le Festival ». Dans un coin, des spectateurs atterrés admirent des gravures sur pierres plates du pays. Des artisans y reproduisent des scènes typiques inspirées des fresques islamiques antiques, ainsi que de bijoux et des accessoires de maison. « Je connais et maîtrise depuis plus de 30 ans. C'est une question d'habitude, de désir pour donner de la vie aux pierres », raconte le sculpteur Mohammad Sabar qui a débuté sa carrière professionnelle comme maçon. « J'ai besoin seulement de quelques simples mais cela demande beaucoup d'efforts, beaucoup de patience pour graver joliment ces pierres », reprend-il en tirant naturellement avant d'ajouter : « Notre clientèle ne s'arrête pas chez eux ». Justement un Espagnol vient de passer par là pour un lion sculpté : « Je sais que dans les pays du Moyen-Orient, on peut toujours négocier le prix mais je me contente seulement de poser la question : est-ce votre dernier prix ? Si je suis confiant à la réponse du vendeur ». On est bien joueur en Espagne.

Mr. Bean et le clown qui fait peur

Autre tradition du Festival : le barbouche. Une sorte de cône rouge d'origine turque, que l'on remotive dans de nombreux groupes folkloriques et que beaucoup de spectateurs adoptent pour une question d'harmonie générale, semble-t-il.

À l'écart du brouhaha et du rassemblement des foules, Anna-Lise Bernsten chante l'opéra dans le Théâtre National Soudain elle cesse son récital pour offrir la nuit aux amoureux de Jérash. Les spectateurs ont beaucoup apprécié le geste de respect alors ils ont applaudi à la fin de l'opéra.

Dans la rue des colonnes, un jeune homme interprète le personnage de Mr. Bean. Un numéro amusant pour les petits et les grands. À quelques pas de là, un clown magicien tout de noir avec un grand chapeau sur la tête fait son apparition. Panique chez les enfants qui se réfugient dans les galabiyas de leurs mères.



Le barbouche, élément du Festival... Au Festival, une dizaine de groupes se sont succédés sur scène pour présenter le spectacle. Les groupes folkloriques de danse arabe ou étrangère se succèdent sur scène jusqu'à ce qu'on dirait improvisée, devant un public ravi de profiter enfin d'un spectacle gratuit.



Rhodia, crée au 1^{er} Janvier 1998, regroupe les activités Chimie et Fibres et Polymères du Groupe Rhône-Poulenc. À cette occasion un cocktail de lancement de Rhodia a été donné le Mardi 28 Juillet 1998 à l'hôtel Intercontinental en présence de Monsieur Jean-Pierre TIROUFLET, Président Directeur Général de Rhodia, Monsieur Antoine SACY, Directeur de la zone du Moyen-Orient et Afrique et Son Excellence Monsieur Bernard BAJOLET, l'Ambassadeur de France en Jordanie. Une grande partie des hommes d'affaires du pays étaient présents à ce lancement pour renforcer leur attachement aux produits de spécialité que leur offrent Rhodia qui est le 3^{ème} chimiste mondial de spécialité. Rhodia est toujours présente aux demandes de leurs clients qui sont servis par Madame ALIA QARAIN HUSSEINI, Directeur Commercial.

Le mot de la semaine
«INDIVIDU»

L'individu est à la fois, une unité de base, consensuelle, une unité de base sociale, une unité de base physique. L'individu latin, le mot individu, possède une construction parfaitement précise. L'adjectif grec «indivisus» signifie «qui ne peut être divisé». La philosophie antique de la notion à ce jour, le substantif latin «individu» signifie «qui ne peut être divisé». L'individu, à l'origine, comme une simple partie d'un tout, un atome social. Cependant, dans la conception occidentale moderne, l'individu est devenu un renversement qui valorise le corpusculaire social jusqu'à en faire l'élément primordial de la société. Celle-ci, devenue un ensemble d'individus, lui est subordonnée. Soulignons que ce renversement, intervenant sous l'impulsion des idées humanistes, est un phénomène exclusivement occidental et les principes qu'il véhicule

ne peuvent être appliqués à d'autres sociétés sans distordre leur fonctionnement. On le comprendra sans peine en citant deux composantes essentielles de l'individualisme. Premièrement, le refus de la hiérarchie au nom de l'égalité et de l'égalisation des conditions qui définit la démocratie et trouve son illustration dans la Déclaration des droits de l'homme. Deuxièmement, la dénonciation des traditions au nom d'une certaine conception de la liberté. Car la tradition est considérée comme étant imposée à l'individu. La modernité rompt ce principe de dépendance au profit de la volonté des hommes. Ces aspirations sont ancrées dans l'histoire de l'Occident. Quand on les trouve dans d'autres sociétés, il s'agit au mieux d'un emprunt, sinon d'une certaine forme de colonialisme.

Véronique Abu-Nijmeh



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D'un corps à l'autre

Santé

La psychose injustifiée du cancer

Malgré tous les progrès de la médecine réalisés en cette fin de siècle, le cancer reste une maladie qui fait peur. Pourtant les guérisons ne sont pas rares et les chiffres, loin d'être catastrophiques.

Son nom même est si terrible que les gens tâchent de ne pas le prononcer. Pour le décrire, tous les détours sont utilisés : on parle de la maladie maligne, la maladie maudite, cette maladie-là. À l'interlocuteur de comprendre qu'il s'agit du cancer. Il est vrai que cette maladie qui peut survenir à tout âge se montre souvent implacable et est à l'origine de profondes souffrances physiques et morales. Dans l'esprit de la plupart des Jordaniens, la tumeur cancéreuse est synonyme de mort prochaine d'où l'inquiétude répandue, après avoir appris que le roi Hussein allait subir une chimiothérapie. Cette idée de l'incubation existe même dans les milieux cultivés ou universitaires. Apprenant que leur camarade de classe est atteint d'un cancer, le premier commentaire des étudiants n'est pas empreint d'espoir : «Le pauvre, il est trop jeune pour mourir».

Le docteur Samir Al-Kayed, le chef de la section de radiothérapie à l'hôpital Al-Bashir, nous assure que tomber malade du cancer n'est pas une condamnation à mort comme beaucoup le croient. «Ayant appris que j'étais malade du cancer, je me suis cru condamné à mort, j'ai eu une femme qui m'a dit que j'étais malade du cancer, tout autour de moi confirmait cette impression, les yeux des parents et des amis, les regards pathétiques. J'ai eu de la chance de découvrir la maladie dans ses premières étapes mais j'ai

subi un traitement dur et douloureux».

Grâce à un dépistage précoce de la tumeur et à un traitement approprié, les malades atteints d'un cancer peuvent espérer guérir et vivre ensuite tout à fait normalement. Plus on découvre tôt la maladie, plus il est facile de la soigner. Les médecins conseillent ainsi de subir des analyses périodiques afin de surveiller l'état de santé général et révéler les premiers

symptômes avant tout développement fatal du cancer. «Le jour où on l'a appris, ce fut un jour de deuil. La maladie était déjà dans ses dernières étapes. Il aurait fallu un miracle pour la sauver et on attendait sa mort d'un moment à l'autre», témoigne un père en larmes qui a perdu sa fille. Sans tests préventifs, le développement de la maladie est si rapide qu'il est souvent trop tard. Mais d'au-

qu'ils n'acceptent même pas d'aller chez leur médecin. Une jeune avocate refuse ainsi de rencontrer un spécialiste malgré la rigidité anormale qu'elle ressent au sein : «Le docteur peut m'annoncer que j'ai le cancer, ce que je ne peux supporter». En fait, l'information sanitaire au public concernant le cancer est encore à faire. Dans ce domaine, les Jordaniens manquent cruellement de culture. Cette maladie est non seulement vécue comme une honte, dont on évite de parler mais les seuls cas parfois évoqués dans les conversations quotidiennes sont ceux des personnes qui n'y ont pas échappé. Les guérisons sont oubliées. Une femme supplie par exemple son médecin de ne rien dire à son mari de peur que celui-ci ne décide de l'abandonner pour vivre avec une autre. Autre exemple encore plus évident d'une ignorance commune : une femme a demandé à son médecin-traitant de lui rédiger un certificat assurant que

son cancer n'était pas contagieux. Son mari et ses enfants ne voulaient plus manger les plats qu'elle préparait !

«Une vie sans douleur»
Ce phénomène qui relève d'une psychose collective est d'autant plus injustifié que les chiffres officiels ne sont pas alarmants. Un registre national du cancer a ainsi été mis en place en 1996 avec l'aide américaine. C'est le troisième registre de ce type dans la région après le Koweït et Israël. Selon cette comptabilité, il y aurait 75 à 80 cas de cancer pour une population de 100.000 personnes. La maladie s'attaque surtout à des personnes de plus de 50 ans mais comme près de moitié de la population jordanienne a moins de 18 ans, elle est aussi répandue parmi les plus jeunes. Bassam Hadjawi du registre national se veut rassurant : «Ces chiffres placent la Jordanie dans une proportion normale par rapport à certains pays où le pourcentage est de 250 cas pour 100.000 personnes».

Autre obstacle de taille à la prise de conscience : l'argent. Les traitements du cancer (chimiothérapie, radiothérapie, thérapie biologique etc...) coûtent très cher. Une seule séance de chimiothérapie est ainsi évaluée à plus de 2000 JD. Le médecin peut choisir une seule méthode mais il peut aussi décider de mixer les traitements afin d'être plus effi-

cace. Cela dépend du type de cancer, de son emplacement chez le malade, de son degré de gravité, de l'âge et de l'état de santé général du patient. Comment imaginer certaines personnes dépenser leur argent pour se soigner alors qu'elles n'ont pas de quoi nourrir leur famille ? Cependant les patients peuvent être suivis gratuitement à l'hôpital Al-Bashir et à

celui de l'Université, ne payer que 10% du total du traitement. Néanmoins, la confiance dans les institutions du pays ne semble pas établie. Les plus riches préfèrent toujours se faire soigner à l'étranger. «Si j'avais été plus riche, je serais allé à l'étranger, même si je trouve tous les soins ici», avoue Hassan, 20 ans, qui se plaint d'une tumeur à la jambe. Au-

jourd'hui grâce à un dialogue permanent avec son médecin, il a pris de l'assurance et est prêt à combattre son cancer. «Je n'ai plus peur comme avant de cette maladie. Je souffre mais cela ne m'importe pas car je sais que je vais guérir et mener une vie paisible sans douleur».

Nissrine A. Sheikh



Le dialogue entre le patient et le médecin est essentiel tout au long du parcours qui mène à la guérison.

Première cause de mortalité chez les hommes

En France, avec environ 220.000 nouveaux cas par an au début des années 90, l'incidence du cancer accompagne le vieillissement de la population et l'on observe une relative stabilité de la mortalité générale par cancer (140.000 décès par an). Cette stabilité globale recouvre une diminution des cancers de l'intestin, de l'estomac et du côlon mais une progression du cancer du poumon particulièrement chez les femmes. Les chances de guérison et les durées de survie varient fortement selon la localisation et le type de cancer. La probabilité de survie à cinq ans est plus faible pour les cancers touchant surtout les hommes (poumon, voies aérodigestives supérieures) que pour les cancers féminins (sein, utérus). Ce phénomène explique en partie la forte surmortalité masculine par cancer. Depuis 1990, la mortalité par cancer est devenue la première cause de mortalité masculine.

Par ailleurs les maladies cardiovasculaires sont responsables du tiers de l'ensemble des décès. En France, la mortalité d'origine cardiovasculaire est toutefois inférieure à celle des pays voisins, peut-être du fait de pratiques alimentaires bénéfiques : alimentation riche mais variée, sans excès de sel ni de graisses animales. Quant à la consommation de vin, lorsqu'elle reste très modérée, elle aurait des effets bénéfiques. Au total, maladies cardiovasculaires et cancers sont responsables de 60% des décès. Outre le vieillissement, les déterminants de ces maladies sont multiples. Même si le rôle des expositions collectives ne doit pas être négligé (cas de l'amiante pour le cancer, par exemple), les comportements individuels ont un poids considérable : hygiène de vie en général, consommation d'alcool et de tabac en particulier.

Maghreb/Occident : le choc des cultures

Yasmina et les autres de Nantier et d'ail- leurs. Livre ethnologique écrit par Camille Lacoste-Dujardin (1992). En prêt au Centre culturel français.



Amina, Baya, Dalila, elles sont vingt-et-une jeunes françaises à avoir répondu aux questions d'une ethnologue spécialiste de leur culture d'origine, la culture maghrébine. Vingt-et-une jeunes femmes de 18 à 28 ans, qui confient leurs difficultés à concilier deux univers. D'un côté, la sphère familiale où pères et mères, bien qu'exilés ou justement parce qu'exilés, restent fortement attachés aux valeurs traditionnelles de leur pays. De l'autre, le monde occidental dans lequel elles sont appelées à vivre leur jeunesse avec leurs aspirations et les rejets de leur âge. Au total, plus de cent heures d'entretiens rapportés dans cet ouvrage, de lecture aisée et captivante, qui ne saurait laisser indifférent tout esprit curieux et attiré par la confrontation et le choc des cultures. Car choc, il y a, si l'on considère

les contradictions auxquelles ces filles doivent faire face entre deux sociétés si divergentes quant à leur mode de vie, leur conception de l'individu, leurs exigences, le rôle attribué à la femme. Entre mœurs incompatibles, la voie médiane est rarement trouvée. Surgissent bien souvent conflits, souffrance, révolte et par-dessus tout, un jugement dépréciatif de la culture qui paraît la plus contraignante, trop facilement confondue avec un despotisme masculin.

Choc pour le lecteur aussi qui voit l'incompréhension vis-à-vis de la civilisation étrangère s'élargir en un fossé que malheureusement l'auteur n'a tenté en rien de limiter. Comment imaginer que certaines jeunes filles préfèrent malgré tout la vie en Afrique du Nord ? Parce qu'elles connaissent mal leur pays d'origine, dira l'ethnologue. Somme de traditions oppressives et rétrogrades dont il faut s'affranchir, le Maghreb ne ressort pas indemne de la confrontation.

Si l'on déplore que le choc des interlocuteurs cède à une certaine homogénéité, on pourrait alors attendre un peu de recul dans la vision d'ensemble de l'enquête. Mais commentés sans objectivité, les témoignages de ces filles constituent en eux-mêmes le fond du discours ethnographique.

Ethnologie préconçue

L'ethnologie peut-elle se permettre d'être féministe, pour ne pas dire carrément féministe ? et occidentalisante ? Que soit une fois dépassée la dichotomie abusive qui place, du côté de la tradition arabe, parmi d'autres démerites, l'idéologie patriarcale autoritaire tout excès de rigueur, le port du voile assimilé à la soumission au joug masculin et à un niveau intellectuel peu éclairé, et du côté de la modernité, l'émancipation féminine, les vertus de l'individualisme (voir la rubrique «le mot de la semaine») et jusqu'au refus de l'islam ! On voudrait aussi qu'aux côtés des femmes, la parole soit donnée aux hommes, dans une enquête qui ferait pendant à cette littérature qui ne cesse de mettre au ban la société maghrébine, et à travers elle, la société arabe.

Que ne cesse-t-on d'attribuer la crispation des responsables de famille autour des valeurs fondamentales de leur société au simple excès de conservatisme et d'autoritarisme paternel, auquel on ajoute volontiers un manque d'intelligence. Mais comment franchir le pas lorsque les dangers de la vie en milieu étranger, bien réels dans la perspective maghrébine, deviennent «supposés» sous la plume de l'ethnologue ? Comment, lorsqu'on estime que les filles éduquées en Occident, donc «très en avance», forment un «ferment stimulateur» susceptible de faire évoluer le Maghreb, évolution positive bien sûr puisqu'on la conçoit dans le sens de l'occidentalisation ?

L'ethnologie puisse-t-elle saisir cette occasion, peut-être unique, d'expliquer l'altérité, cette dialectique entre notre univers et celui de l'autre, sans préjugés et sans céder à la tentation de plaquer ses propres valeurs sur les sociétés d'ailleurs.

Véronique Abu-Nijmeh



Comment imaginer que certaines jeunes filles préfèrent malgré tout la vie en Afrique du Nord ? Parce qu'elles connaissent mal leur pays d'origine, dira l'ethnologue.

Il était une fois la maison d'un poète

À l'ouest du centre-ville d'Irbid, la villa de la famille Al-Tal est accrochée à une colline. Une bâtisse exceptionnelle, et pas seulement parce que le célèbre poète jordanien Arare y vécut. Visite guidée des lieux.

De grands murs clairs, des pierres noires. Des muriers, des oliviers, des citrons et du jasmin. Une puissante porte en fer, encadrée en ogive dans une large façade, nous invite à entrer avec simplement ces deux mots : «La maison d'Arare». Le fils du poète, Muin Al-Tal, nous offre d'entrer dans ce qui fut son terrain de jeu, alors qu'il était enfant : «J'y ai vécu avec mon père et je me souviens que dans ce jardin, je montais aux arbres et je jouais parmi les fleurs que plantait ma grand-mère et qui répandaient leur parfum tout autour de la maison. J'essaie aujourd'hui de tout reconstruire comme il y a 65 ans».

La maison est encore plus ancienne et ressemble à ces vieilles demeures de Damas au charme incomparable. Elle fut bâtie il y a 96 ans exactement par le grand-père de Muin, qui en dessina les plans : «Mon grand-père était fasciné par les

fenêtres en arc en plein cintre, c'est pour cela qu'on en trouve autant dans les chambres. Quant aux murs, ils sont particulièrement épais, construits en pierre avec un mélange de boue et de paille, afin de conserver la température».

Récemment, après avoir regagné la maison de leurs aïeux, les héritiers et surtout les sœurs du poète ont décidé de la prêter au Ministère de la Culture pour en faire un musée qui soit consacré à leur frère. Les autorités avaient déjà transféré le corps d'Arare dans la demeure familiale. Elles se chargent désormais de recueillir tous les documents et objets concernant l'artiste. Des annonces ont notamment été publiées dans les journaux pour demander aux gens de prêter les souvenirs qui leur avaient été distribués à la mort d'Arare.

En outre, la maison a connu beaucoup d'activités culturelles depuis que le Ministère s'en oc-



Le corps de l'artiste a été transféré dans la maison familiale en 1989 par le Ministère de la culture.

cupe (fin 1994). Des pièces de théâtre pour les adultes et les enfants ont été présentées, ainsi que des concerts et trois festivals poétiques. Aujourd'hui la maison est ouverte au public et reçoit des visiteurs aussi bien occidentaux qu'arabes, intéressés par la littérature ou l'archi-

ture et curieux de découvrir à Irbid un témoignage de l'histoire jordanienne.

Shadin Suleiman

La maison d'Arare. Visites tous les jours de 8h à 14h. Renseignements au 02240874.

Alcool, athéisme et révolution

tés anglaises, le poète a souvent été arrêté et connu en conséquence une vie professionnelle pour le moins diversifiée puisqu'il pratiqua 27 métiers différents : de conseiller du roi Abdallah à greffier en passant par directeur d'école ou administrateur de région. D'autres aspects de sa vie marquent son anti-conformisme. D'abord, son attachement à la communauté tzigane. «Il a traversé chez eux l'égalité et la justice qu'il n'a pas trouvées dans sa propre société civile», explique le délégué culturel. Parmi ce peuple oublié encore aujourd'hui, il a découvert les danses, les chants et la joie de vivre et de penser spontanément sans les entraves imposées par la société d'Arare.

Il y eut aussi sa fascination pour l'alcool, née de ses lectures du poète persan Omar Khayyam dont il a traduit quelques œuvres. Selon Arare, l'alcool n'était qu'une façon d'augmenter son inspiration poétique, un «bateau ivre» pour traverser la rivière. Enfin il a souvent été accusé d'être athée parce qu'il dénonçait les faux-dévois de l'islam, ces hypocrites haut-placés qui détournent la religion de sa vérité. Or, sa maison est aujourd'hui voisine d'une église et d'une mosquée. Doit-on y voir un retour de bâton ou une heureuse coïncidence, signe de sa tolérance spirituelle ? L'esprit d'Arare est trop présent entre ces murs pour qu'on adhère à la première hypothèse.

Sh. S.



Mustafa Wahli Al-Tal est né à Irbid le 25 mai 1899 et mort le 24 mai 1949. Il s'est donné lui-même le surnom de Arare. «Je suis comme l'arare», disait-il en faisant référence peut-être à une ancienne plante arabe. À moins qu'il ne voulait parler du poète Arare ben Amer, qui, comme lui, avait été maltraité par sa belle-mère. Dans une société conservatrice, la vie de Mustafa Al-Tal fut en tout cas celle d'un poète iconoclaste et même révolutionnaire. «Il était connu pour son refus de la vie sociale et politique à une époque où la Jordanie était placée sous mandat britannique», indique Shadin Al-Azawi, le représentant du Ministère de la culture à Irbid. Opposé à toute collaboration avec les autori-

The Star

Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Addasi

The first Arab cities chess competition

Cairo takes the championship

By Abdul Hamid Addasi
Special to The Star

CAIRO grabbed the title at the first Arab cities chess tournament, and were presented with a cheque for \$1000 at the closing ceremony held at the Cultural Center in Salt, Saturday, under the patronage of Chief Chamberlain, Prince Ra'ad.

Ten teams took part in the championship from cities in Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Palestine, Lebanon and UAE.

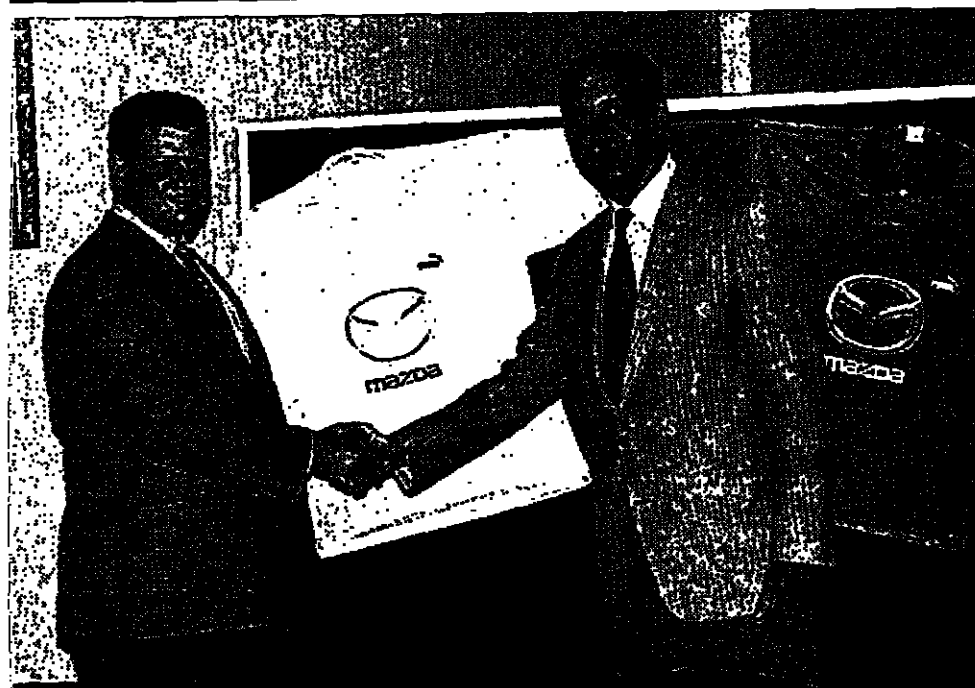
Baghdad took second prize of \$750 in the team competition, and Damascus came third, winning \$500.

Medals were also awarded to individual players in the tables competition.

Speaking on behalf of Prince Mohammed, the head of the Royal Jordanian Chess Federation, Prince Ra'ad, thanked the participating



teams for competing in the chess championship. He also thanked the Salt Reconstruction Corporation for hosting the competition and for contributing the prizes and medals.



Mr Saeed Shoukum, president of Al-Ahli Club, shaking hands with Mr Hussein Manco, president of Mazda Corporation in Amman. Mazda will sponsor the football team for the next season

The Balqa Arab Badminton Championship Jordan dominates the titles



Makes club for women, good start for the future

Amman (Star)—Jordan dominates the titles of the Balqa Arab Championship for Youth in Badminton held at the Baccaloria School in Amman last week. The championship was hosted by the Mahes Club with the participation of Jordan,

Egypt, Palestine and Iraq. The closing ceremony was presided over by Mr Isam Ari-dah, General Secretary of the Youth Ministry, on behalf of HRH Prince Abdullah Ibn Al-Hussein.

Five clubs took part in the

men competition: Al Madina and Mahes from Jordan, Al Mahawel from Iraq and Hil-youd and Al Masri from Egypt. Mahes took the title after winning all its matches.

Three clubs took part in the women's competition: Al-Madina and Mahes from Jordan and Mar-Yousef from Palestine. Al-

Madina took the title. In the men singles: Montaser Al-Nobani from Mahes proved that he is Jordan's rising star when he beat Egyptian Kareem Shaded in the final in two straight sets 15-4, 15-4.

His strong performance was marked by a quick offence and a strong serve. Third place was held jointly by Basel Al Nobani from Mahes and the Egyptian Shadi Yihya.

In the women singles, Lina Al Rashdan from Al-Madina completed Jordan's domination of the competition after beating Amirah Hanayneh representing Mar-Yousef from Palestine in two straight

sets. 11-3, 11-5



Al Ahli Club keeps its title for the second year consecutively in the Jordanian's Handball First Division League for the 1998 season

Italian's pride: Three years after breaking leg

Pantani wins Tour de France

PARIS, France—Shadowed for three weeks by a drug scandal and sit-down strikes, the Tour de France staggered to a finish Sunday with Marco Pantani winning a race that unraveled like no other since it began in 1903.

With the sun bright after a heavy shower, the Italian rode in triumph along the Champs-Elysees, proving he indeed was a champion but still no match for the scandal that enveloped cycling's showcase event.

He is the first Italian to win the Tour de France since Felice Gimondi in 1965. He is also the first to win both the Tour of Italy and the Tour de France in one year since cycling great Miguel Indurain did so five years ago. "To win the Giro and the Tour de France is something my country has been waiting for a long time," Pantani said. "This day will remain one of the most important days in my life."

Defending champion Jan Ullrich of Germany was second, 3 minutes, 21 seconds behind. Bobby Julich of Glenwood Springs, Colo., was third, at 4:08, the best performance by an American since Greg

LeMond won his third crown in 1990. Julich, riding with the French Cofidis team, joined LeMond as the only Americans to finish in the top three.

"This year I had little chance to win," said Julich, riding in his second Tour. "Pantani was on another planet. When he attacks the mountains, no one can match him."

This was a race in which many riders felt they were being treated as criminals during the ongoing investigation. Once, they delayed the start of a stage by two hours. Another time they held hands in protest crossing the finish line, prompting organizers to wipe out the entire stage. "No matter what happened here, it was my dream," Julich said. "Different things come about and try to mess with you. But it's the strong people that persevere and don't let it bother them. I'm very proud right now."

Tom Steels of Belgium took the 21st and final stage on the Champs-Elysees. Steels won four stages, including the first in Dublin, Ireland. Pantani, riding for the Mercatone Uno team, finished the 91-mile



Tour de France champion Marco Pantani, from Italy, celebrates his victory

stage from Melun to Paris in the pack in 45th place. A flat tire held him up for less than a minute.

Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro sent Pantani a message offering "the thanks of the Italian people for having given

Italy this exceptional success." Pantani's tributes are just beginning. A wine shop in Alessandria, in northern Italy, dedicated a Piedmont wine after the rider. In Cesnatico, Italy, a banner on a building read "Pantani flies high." Some 2,000 people took to bicycles in the town's streets to celebrate their hometown hero.

The Tour de France crowds, populated by many vacationing Italians, cheered Pantani every time he passed, easily spotted in the leader's yellow jersey. Pantani took the lead last Monday after Ullrich lost nine minutes in one day.

The Italian came in third in 1994 and 1997 and lost by more than 14 minutes to Ullrich last year. Pantani broke his leg at the end of 1995 and did not race in 1996.

On Sunday, however, it was a time to luxuriate in the traditional nine laps up and down the Champs-Elysees, from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde.

Usually the finale of the grueling competition is cause for revelry. But this year, there was a sense that the end could not come soon enough for a pack whose numbers dwindled as the race went on.

Nearly each day since the start of the Tour on July 11 in Dublin, there have been new drug revelations, police

searches and rider protests. Only 14 of the original 21 teams ended the race; six dropped out and one team, Festina, was expelled. The pack was reduced to fewer than 100 riders from the original 189.

While riders criss-crossed France, seven people were placed under investigation—one step short of being charged of drug-related offenses: three officials of the Festina team, two from TVM, a doctor from ONCE and one rider, Italy's Rodolfo Massi of the Casino team, the Tour's leading mountain climber.

Festina was ousted on July 17, after team director Bruno Roussel admitted to an organized system of providing performance-enhancing drugs to his riders. Six other teams dropped out in protest over police tactics and treatment during the Tour, leaving 14 in the competition. On Monday riders in the Dutch TVM team are to be questioned about drug use by police in Reims.

Britain's Chris Boardman was the Tour's early leader before crashing into a stone wall in Ireland and leaving the race. "The Tour is big enough to handle one scandal like this," he said. "But maybe not another."

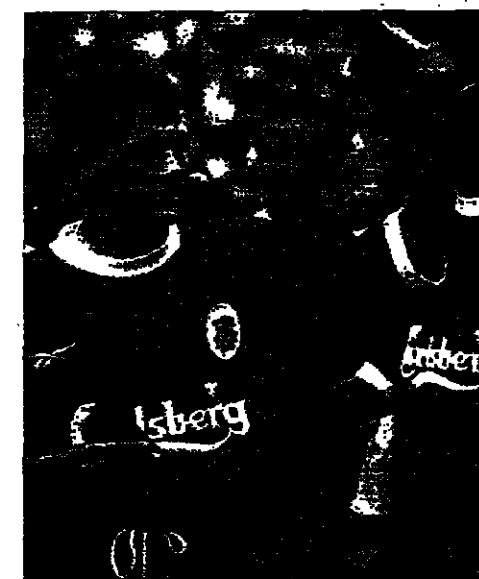
Michael Owen back in highlights as Liverpool wins Carlsberg Trophy

DUBLIN—England star Michael Owen grabbed his first goal since his World Cup heroics as Liverpool beat English Premiership rivals Leeds to win the four-team Carlsberg Trophy on Saturday.

It was Owen's first start in Liverpool's pre-season buildup and the club's vast Irish following in the 30,000 crowd erupted after 56 minutes when he collected a ball from Paul Ince, cut across a defender and smashed a 20-yard drive inside the far post.

Owen could have had a hat-trick in the first half, was unlucky not to win a penalty, and troubled Leeds with his searing pace all afternoon.

A minute before Owen's goal, Czech star Patrik Berger had put Liverpool ahead with a 20-meter drive following good work from Steve McManaman. In the third place playoff, Italian giant Lazio, which had 60 million pounds (\$100 million) of talent on show, beat the Irish part-timers of St. Patrick's Athletic 4-1.



Women's soccer has different goal

NEW YORK—The nineteenth century American novelist Louise May Alcott once said about the ability of women to do the same things as men: "Whatever we can do and do well, we have a right to do, and I don't think anyone will deny us."

That, in a nutshell, is one way to describe the attitude of the United States women's soccer team. Loaded with talented players like Mia Hamm, Kristine Lilly, Michelle Akers and Julie Foudy, household names to the over seven million girls who play soccer in this country, the national team, first assembled in 1985, won the first ever Women's World Cup in 1991 and Olympic gold two years ago in Atlanta.

Last Monday, the team added a Goodwill Games gold medal to its trophy case

after defeating China 2-0 in the final. Next summer, the team hopes to have similar success at the 1999 Women's World Cup, to be held in the United States.

Nevertheless, the success of women's soccer in this country has come despite the lack of a professional league. Unlike women's basketball, which currently has two pro leagues (the American Basketball League and the Women's NBA), women's soccer has had trouble forming one of its own. With the absence of a league, the national team is at a clear disadvantage to other countries like Germany and Norway, which have strong leagues from which they can further develop talent for their national team program.

"After college we are losing that because these other

countries have a league and we don't," said Hamm, a former North Carolina All-American who is considered by many to be the world's finest female soccer player.

Many believe that the United States Soccer Federation has failed to sanction or create a professional women's league for fear that it may cut into the profits of Major League Soccer, the still-developing, three-year-old professional men's league.

Following the success at the Olympics, sponsors such as Nike had planned to have an eight-team league up and running by this summer, but the idea never came to flourish. And despite the popularity of the women's game, it is unclear whether there's a large enough fan-base to sustain a profitable league.

"Anyone can start a pro league," said Kimberly Shaw, coach of the Cleveland Eclipse, one of 34 teams to play in the W-League, a five-year-old developmental women's minor league system.

"But the real question is can it survive financially over time." Others said it would be best to launch a pro league following next summer's Women's World Cup, as was done with Major League Soccer after the 1994 World Cup.

The Women's World Cup next year will see what kind of crowds can be attracted," Shaw said. But how has the national team been able to excel for so long without a pro league?

Peter Amos, part-owner and general manager of New York Magic of the W-League, said that in this country

"female athletes are not only widely accepted, but they are encouraged and promoted. I believe this big picture has the largest part to do with our success."

Michael Sabatelle, women's coach at Emory University (Ga.) and for the Atlanta Classics, also of the W-League, said the team's success will only make the sport even more popular among girls. "Younger players have now had female role models playing at the highest level in the world for eight years," he said.

Added Hamm: "As soccer players growing up, we didn't have female role models to look up to. One of the reasons we have been so successful is because our youth programs are strong."

THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Apple's brave move into the home market, with an attractive, inexpensive personal computer:

iMac. You Mac?

By a Star Staff Writer

AS PART of Apple's continued drive to 're-invent' itself, the company is introducing a flashy new system, which is already taking the computer and information technology media by storm.

The iMac is Apple's strongest and most hyped release for many, many years. The 'i' stands for Internet, as the iMac comes equipped with a 56Kbps modem and accompanying software.

Apple has prepared an enormous promotion campaign for the iMac. Images of the new Mac will be everywhere.

The iMac will sell for around \$1,300 and will incorporate a 233-MHz PowerPC G3 processor, 512 KB cache, 32 MB of RAM, a 4 GB hard drive, Mac OS 8.1, two USB ports, an infrared port, keyboard, mouse, a 24X speed CD-ROM drive, a built-in 15-inch monitor, a 33-Kbps modem, and built-in stereo speakers.

What makes the iMac stand out is its stylish design. It is a very good looking machine, based on a neat all-in-one design for monitor and CPU.

The whole idea, which Apple has finally come to realize, is that it cannot increase the number of Macintosh users by only targeting its traditional markets of education and publishing. It needs to get into the home—and fast.

The United States alone still has some 100 million homes without a personal computer.

Apple believes that it is that market that it should tap into. Instead of targeting the 'Mac faithful', the idea is to serve everyone else, that Apple has not been able to get to over the last decade.



In the United States, news of iMac has prompted around a hundred thousand orders already, mainly from retailers. In fact, analysts predict that, by the end of 1998, Apple will have managed to sell some 70,000 to 80,000 units. The level of sales is supposed to peak during the Christmas season, which is traditionally a period of top sales.

If Apple gets their way, they should sell over 1.5 million units by the end of 1999. This could increase Apple's market share in personal computers 4.5 to 5 percent, stealing some of the market from Intel-based PCs running Windows.

Looking at recent statistics on the number of Macintosh users worldwide, it is estimated that the new iMac will

Computer & IT companies

Continuing its global expansion, market leadership and commitment to the Middle East region, Compaq Computer Corporation announced today in Amman that it has appointed Scientific & Medical Supplies Co. (SMS) as its local distributor in the Jordanian market.

After Compaq's acquisition of Digital Equipment, which was finalized on June 11, 1998, Compaq announced that it envisions a world where all information is on line and anybody can securely access information, communicate and conduct electronic commerce from any place at any time.

Today, by establishing a local distribution partnership with SMS, we are able to provide our customers with a wider choice and enable our dealers to serve our customers more competitively and actively," said Joseph Hanaia, General Manager, Market Development Group for the Middle East, Mediterranean and Africa.

SMS is a leader in the distribution of computers and peripherals in the Jordanian market.

"Our commitment to provide dealers with a complete line of computers necessitates the inclusion of Compaq," said Maher Mousher, Assistant General Manager at SMS.

To support its wide coverage, SMS's products are available for immediate delivery and the company extends credit and service facilities to its dealers network.

Mohammad Akkad, District Sales Manager for Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus, Syria, the Palestinian Authority and the former Soviet republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus region said that he is confident that Compaq's partnership

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ship with SMS and its dealers will allow Compaq to address the needs of small and medium businesses more actively and competitively. On the other hand, Compaq System Resellers, namely Jordan Data Systems, Ideal Tech, and Computer & Engineering Bureau will continue to address and provide total computing solutions to enterprise customers.

Compaq made the announcement during a meeting with its local resellers here in Jordan that was held at the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman and was followed by a meeting with the press.

Since the beginning of this year, Compaq has increased the amount of training, service and support it provides to its partners and customers in Jordan in order to further increase its market leadership position as compared to the

second ranking computer manufacturer.

Scientific and Medical Supplies Co. (SMS) was formerly the scientific division of Mousher Cousins Co. and is involved in the supply and support of high technology equipment for labs, hospitals, schools, as well as computers for all applications. It is the Jordanian leader in its field, with 1997 sales in the region of US \$17 million. SMS's distribution channel, which handles HP products as well as multiple brands of software and PC's reaches into every high tech outlet in Jordan, and has annual sales of US \$8 million.

Project division can equip a hospital or a university on a turnkey basis, and has been active in many neighboring countries as well as Jordan since the mid seventies.

News update

Network Associates: A unified front against viruses

A new front has been established against computer viruses. Under the name of Network Associates, a merger has taken place between McAfee, Network General, and recently, Dr Solomon Group.

All these are well-known software companies, specializing in virus detection and removal. The result should be the production of high level software in areas related to viruses. Computer viruses have grown and developed. Network Associates will work to serve users at all levels (single or network users). The agree-

ment to absorb Dr Solomon Group into Network Associates was worth \$640 dollars.



BYTE Middle East's farewell issue

The last issue of BYTE Middle East magazine has just been released. The farewell issue includes a look back at the magazine since its first publication four years ago.

It includes some heart-felt tributes to the people who made BYTE Middle East a success. The magazine had to halt publishing because CMP Publications bought BYTE International in the USA.

Network Associates launches Internet services

Network Associates has the honor of being the first to launch Internet services in the Middle East. The company has announced that it will be providing Internet access to its customers in the region. The service will be available through a dedicated line, and will allow users to access the Internet from their computers. The company also offers a range of other services, including email, web browsing, and file sharing.



INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

The state of Arabic software

AROUND FOUR or five years ago, the prospects for Arabic software looked quite good. Users all over the Middle East and North Africa were demanding Arabization of basic productivity and business applications—in addition to requesting Arabization of educational and entertainment software.

Tens of companies, from Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Jordan sprung up to cater to these needs.

At one time, in 1995, there were no less than four major Arabic wordprocessors on the market, developed by Arabs. Products like *Al Qalam* (The Pen), or *Al Katab* (The Writer) have since dwindled and disappeared. Why? Well, because the mighty Microsoft Arabic Word pushed them out of the market!

So, Arabic software developers were no match for international heavyweights like Microsoft and Lotus; especially in mainstream applications like wordprocessing, spreadsheets and so on.

So, a couple of years ago, it seemed quite obvious that the right route to take was to produce software where Arabs could possibly excel more than international publishers. The result has been an avalanche of educational software, mainly on CD-ROM, most of which includes official school course work and curriculum, especially in the Gulf. Also, software titles covering religion really spread in the Middle East. The Holy Qur'an, the Prophets Tradition and general Islamic teachings have received much attention from software developers. Additionally, software related to tourism and geography emerged and now constitutes a large portion of software produced.

So, where does that leave Arab software developers? From the looks of it, most have turned into "professional compilers of information on CD-ROMs in Arabic."

Is that really software programming? Doesn't it seem like these software producers have shifted away from programming and into "media" or the "information business"?

Don't get me wrong. This is not bad, but it signals a sheer loss of Arab software production. It means that the productivity software you buy, and use, is most likely produced by an American or European firm.

Why don't you just try to look at the software you use daily. How many of your applications were written by an Arab software company? Even on the Internet, we browse Arabic Web pages through products like Netscape and Microsoft Explorer. (Some Arabic plug-ins are written by Arabs, but the browser is the core)

So, where are all those Arab software development firms. The countless companies which emerged in the early nineties?

Most software developers who used to work on productivity applications have moved onto development in very, very specialized fields; mainly serving other software companies, usually international publishers. In simpler terms, they are providing Arabic coding for international software companies. The code goes into either big software systems (customized software) or smaller applications. In any case, they have become suppliers of programming services, rather than software publishers!

Of course, we have to remember, after all, that the same applies to French, German, Turkish and other developers; all of whom have been beaten by Microsoft's German, French or Turkish version of Word!

So, where do we go from here? It's worth taking a serious look at the state of Arabic software. It will mark the beginning of a new phase, taking Arabic software developers into the next century.

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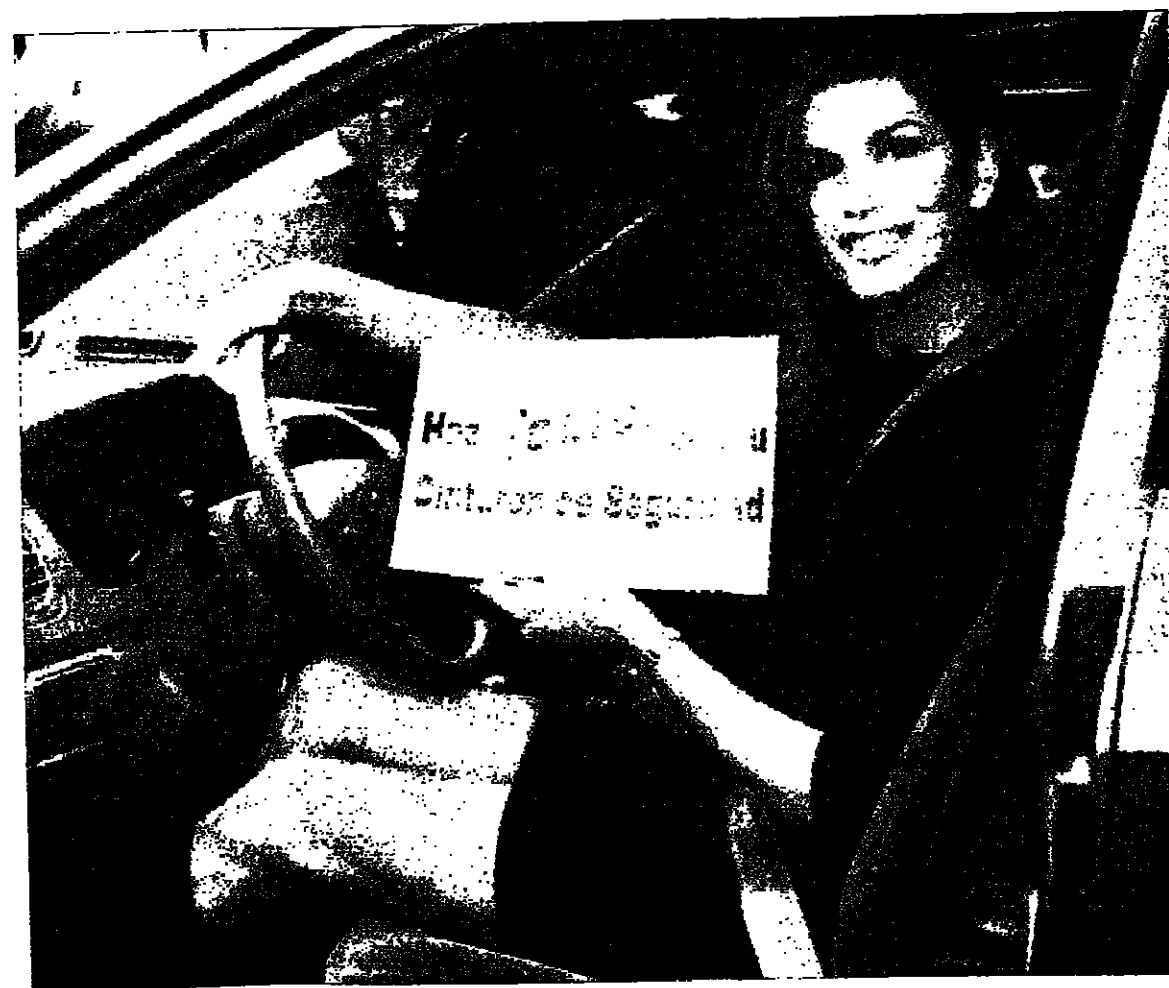
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ون قاتش ٢ جهاز قياس الجلوكوز في الدم
1- Press power, insert strip. 2- Apply sample. No wiping. No timing.
3- Accurate results in 45 seconds.



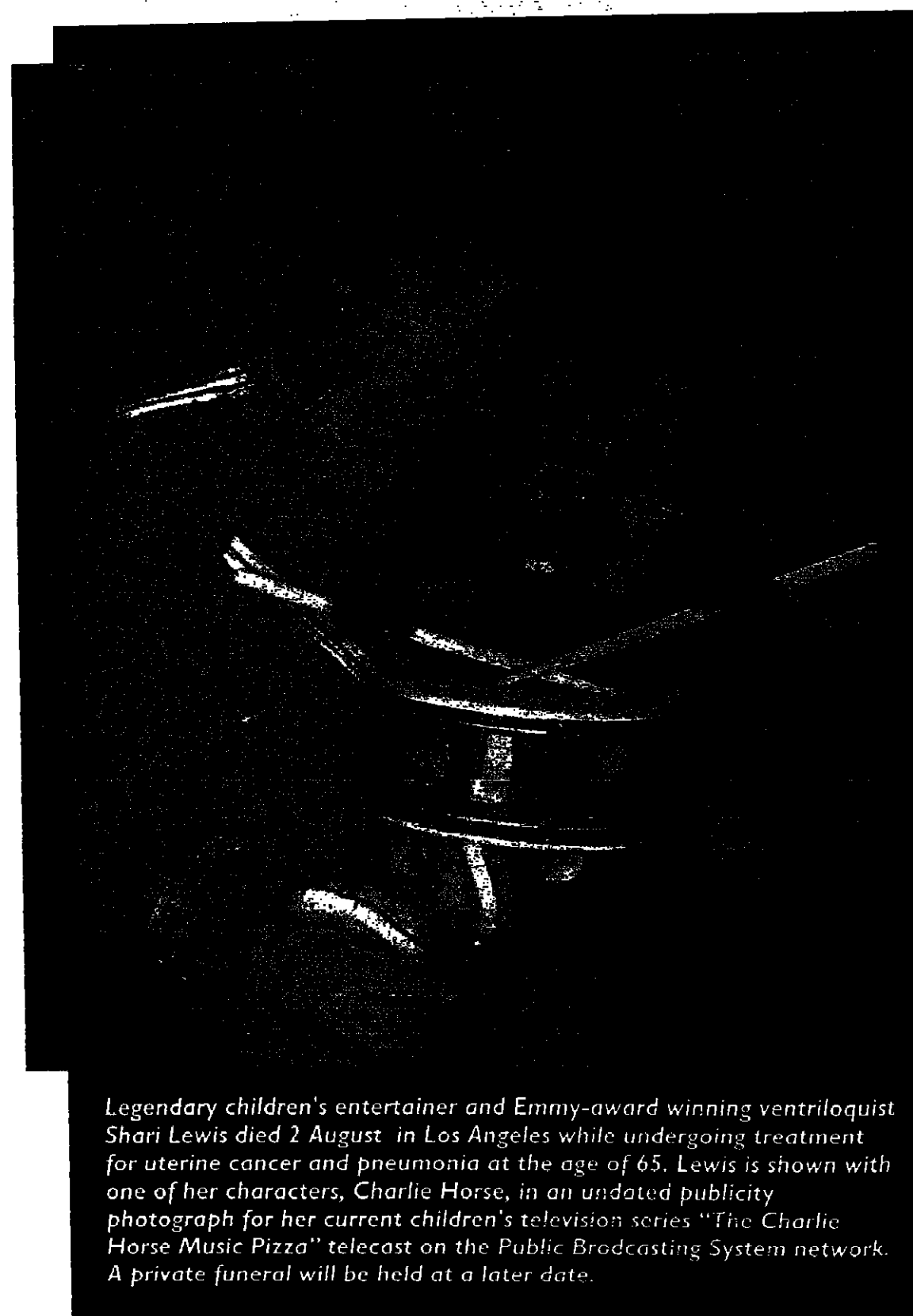
Cast members of the new film "How Stella Got Her Groove Back" pose together at the film's premiere 3 August at Mann's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. Shown (L-R) are Whoopi Goldberg, Angela Bassett and Regina King. In the film, Bassett portrays Stella, a high powered stock broker who has forgotten how to have fun, so she takes a vacation to Jamaica with her friend, Delilah, played by Goldberg, and finds romance with a younger man. King portrays Stella's sister in the film which opens in the United States August 14.



A Brazilian model checks her mirror during the Cosmoprof Cosmetica '98 in Sao Paulo. Cosmoprof Cosmetica '98, which takes place from 20 countries and an estimated audience of 100 million.



Superman's Cindy Crawford poses in a car holding a sign reading "Click for your safety." in Santiago, August. Crawford is in Chile to support a campaign by the Chilean Ministry of Transportation to encourage people to always wear seatbelts while driving.



Legendary children's entertainer and Emmy-award winning ventriloquist Shari Lewis died 2 August in Los Angeles while undergoing treatment for uterine cancer and pneumonia at the age of 65. Lewis is shown with one of her characters, Charlie Horse, in an undated publicity photograph for her current children's television series "The Charlie Horse Music Pizza" telecast on the Public Broadcasting System network. A private funeral will be held at a later date.